

DOCUMENTARY FILM AS EVIDENCE IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my beloved father,
who did not make it until the end of this journey.

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There are many people who have invested in my work over the past five years and I am enormously grateful. There is no way I can thank all of those who made this journey worthwhile, fun and intellectually stimulating. In short, I am greatly indebted to my friends and family. Their love, encouragement, and kind support, have raised the bar for what I expect of myself. I am truly grateful to all of them for investing in me and my ideas.

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INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This PhD thesis consists of three components – a written component which follows, three short documentary films on a Digital Video Disc (DVD), which can be found attached at the back of the written thesis, and a website on the World Wide Web, which is dedicated to the aforementioned films and can be found at the following address:

<http://www.documentarytruth.comule.com/index.html>. All three components complement each other and should be examined together. It is recommended that the reader/viewer first read the text, go on to examine the website and watch the short films in the end. The DVD contains a 29 minute documentary film, *Syntagma 34* (Valsamis, 2011), and two variations of it: *Syntagma Sq.* (ibid., 6 m.), and *Syntagma Diary* (ibid., 5 m.). In all three I acted as producer, director, cameraperson, editor, and sound recordist and so I have exercised absolute creative control over the making of the project and I take final responsibility for the resulting films. I shot these short documentaries in Athens, Greece, at Syntagma (constitution) square on June 28-29, 2011. The shooting was done during the two-day general strike and the demonstrations that took place to protest against the recent cruel austerity measures as well as the widespread corruption in Greek politics. The website was also created by me and I am solely responsible for its design and contents. The films and the website account for approximately 35 percent of the thesis and the written component for about 65 percent.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS	4
ABSTRACT	6
INTRODUCTION	
A. Background and Motivations	8
B. Reality - Veracity/Truth - Fiction/Non-fiction - Shared Authorship	10
C. Filmic Verisimilitude	14
D. The Chapters of the Thesis	15
E. Methodology	18
CHAPTER I	
I. A. A Short Prologue to Chapter I	24
I. B. The Soviet Montage Cinema	25
I. B. 1 Dziga Vertov and the Cine-Eyes	35
I. C. Robert Flaherty	47
I. D. John Grierson and the British Documentary Movement	53
I. E. Cinema Vérités: <i>The Fertile Seedbed of the Long, Strange Sixties</i>	66
Direct Cinema and Cinéma Vérité, Two Observing Methods	
I. F. A Short Epilogue to Chapter I	78
CHAPTER II	
II. A. A Short Prologue to Chapter II	81
II. B. The Origins of the Internet	84
II. B. 1 Characteristics of the Internet	87
II. C. Digital Representation and the Documentary Online	99

II. D. This Is a Copyrighted World	105
II. E. R/W and R/O modes of Culture	108
II. F. Fair Use	110
II. G. The Author in the Blender	114
II. H. A Short Epilogue to Chapter II	118
CHAPTER III	
III. A. A Short Prologue to Chapter III	120
III. B. <i>This is what Democracy Looks Like</i> (Friedberg and Rowley, 2000)	122
III. C. <i>Into the Fire</i> (Dicks, 2011)	128
III. D. <i>Bahrain: Shouting In the Dark</i> (Welsh, 2011)	133
III. E. A Short Epilogue to Chapter III	140
CHAPTER IV	
IV. A. The Film's Context	147
IV. A. 1 The Debt Burden	148
IV. A. 2 Political Corruption and the Dawning of Fascism	151
IV. A. 3 The Mainstream Media's Role	153
IV. A. 4 The People As the Enemy	154
IV. A. 5 The Need for Change	158
IV. B. <i>Syntagma 34, Syntagma Sq., Syntagma Diary</i> (Valsamis, 2011)	159
IV. B. 1 The Shooting Method	161
IV. B. 2 The Digital Sublime	165
IV. B. 3 The Goals of the Thesis	166
IV. B. 4 Issues of Documentary Ethics	168
IV. B. 5 The Films	171
IV. B. 6 Conclusions	181
BIBLIOGRAPHY	185
FILMOGRAPHY	208

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this PhD research is to investigate the truth claims of documentary film in relation to the capturing of social reality through the negotiation of digital technology. The following research questions serve as a starting point for the conducted investigation:

Even if Errol Morris is justified in stating that nothing can guarantee the truth, by what means might the evidential status of documentary be elevated?

In what ways, and under what circumstances, might documentary enhance its claims to represent social reality in the digital era?

This qualitative research was conducted through a written thesis and Practice as Research (PaR). Through the history of documentary film, the former investigates the aims and methods of three documentary movements (Vertov's Kino-Eyes, Grierson's British Documentary and Vérité, as exemplified by its Direct Cinema and Cinéma Vérité branches), examines three case studies to discuss issues raised in documentary film-making by digital technologies, and critically reflects on the PaR. The latter consists of three short documentary films on video, attempting to honestly record what took place in Athens, during the massive and peaceful protests of the Greek people on 28 and 29 June 2011, and a website aiming to enhance the viewer's understanding of the films' subject.

The thesis indicates that, although nothing can ultimately guarantee the truth, digital technologies may elevate documentary's evidential status, since they affect how

documentary works are produced, distributed, and received, generally allowing for greater availability, affordability, plurality of views, and cross-examination of testimonies.

This study concludes that if documentary film records social reality honestly, without falsifying or omitting crucial facts, it has a certain value as evidence regardless of contents, techniques, or stylistic elements chosen. It also highlights the importance of the open admission of where the film-maker's sympathies lie in the digital as well as the conventional cinematography. Ultimately, evidence from multiple sources that the rising culture of Remix is able to offer, through digital platforms of communication like the internet, brings together a multitude of testimonies and may lead to higher evidential status.

INTRODUCTION

A. Background and Motivations.

My interest in investigating the truth claims of documentary filmmaking arises from my work in theatre. When I was writing a children's play, in 2001, on the subject of the life and times of Alexander the Great, I confronted several issues regarding historical reality which led me to a series of anxious questions about what is fact and what is doxa, what is real and what is unreal, and about how to trace partiality and the workings of fiction in historical documents which lay claims to fairness and objectivity. Having decided from the beginning to present on stage nothing but historical facts, in a way a child could comprehend, I had to study several analyses by some of the finest Greek historians in order to evaluate the evidential status of each of my sources. The task was hard but it was possible to achieve thanks to a rich bibliography on the subject that offered me the chance to overcome many ambiguities and be as veridical as can be in my representation of Alexander the Great. However, in the two following years (2002-2003), during which the play was performed in the capital of Greece, those questions kept coming repeatedly by critics, friends, and members of the audience alike; a great many people seemed to be anxious about the truthfulness of the representation they had encountered.

Reflecting on my working experience behind the camera, in several positions both in fiction and non-fiction audiovisual projects, my main concerns have always been rather with the practicalities of each of my undertaken tasks. However, when I was invited to adapt my play on Alexander the Great for a TV documentary, the same questions about

authenticity and impartiality reappeared in different form. The sources were there, well researched and evaluated already, but the means of representation had changed. The theatrical conventions, which I came to appreciate during my years of studying and practicing theatre acting, were no longer applicable. Representation through the lens applied new meanings to the old question of truthfulness and introduced a series of implications. Thanks to Charles Pierce, Andre Bazin, and to my years of studying cinema directing, the case seemed clear in the first place. So long as I believed in an indexical bond between the source object and its representation through photography there was not much to be asked. But, as Rodney King's tape¹ made clear, the moving image is of a much more ambiguous nature. Another conclusion this tape suggested is that "vision always remains an active process of cognition" (Cowie, 2011, p. 7) rather than mere observation of a real world. Issues in politics of historiography, and in the writing of the theatre play, were complicated by problems inherent in the ambivalent nature of the recorded image, and all those concerns took on a pressing quality as I reflected on the writing of the TV documentary script. The project was finally abandoned by the producers, due to reasons of financing, and so was the script, but the questions remained. The above incident was the beginning of the following thesis which seeks answers to two fundamental questions:

Even if Errol Morris is justified in stating that nothing can guarantee the truth,² by what means might the evidential status of documentary be elevated?

¹ Frank Tomasulo, in a seminal article, described how nine and a half minutes of amateur video footage of the African-American Rodney King severely beaten by the L.A police, was used in court as evidence serving both the defence attorneys (in slow motion) and the prosecution. Rodney King's case, in L.A, ignited "the worst riots in the United States in this century [(twentieth)], with a toll of fifty-three people dead and \$1 billion in damage" (Tomasulo, 1996, p. 75).

² Morris, in a very interesting interview, reaffirmed his 1991 statement in 2004 (Morris, 2004).

In what ways, and under what circumstances, might documentary enhance its claims to represent social reality in the digital era?

These research questions are answered by the examination of the relevant theory on the subject, the examination of three case studies, and the written reflection on the practical elements (PaR) of the thesis. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, with specific attention to film studies and the example of the realist film throughout its history, this thesis investigates the historical claims of documentary film on the veridical representation of reality and how the process of digitization impacts on those claims. This project is made in agreement with Martin Heidegger's remark about research in human sciences, i.e. that all sciences concerning life are fated to be imprecise, in order to be efficient, and this imprecision is not a flaw but only "the fulfilment of a demand essential to this type of research" (1996, p. 50).

B. Reality - Veracity/Truth - Fiction/Non-fiction - Shared Authorship.

There is an ongoing debate about the constituent elements of reality, from Plato's and Aristotle's disagreement on its internal or external origin³ to our postmodern world in which reality has been described by many as a socially constructed entity (Rancière, 2010, p. 148)⁴ and even as "just another image" (Bruzzi, 2000, p. 04). Since this project does not aim to resolve this philosophic issue, and need not propose a definite

³ In the *Republic*, the metaphor of the cave, in the beginning of the seventh book, and the metaphor of the three beds, in the beginning of the tenth book, demonstrate with clarity Plato's idea of reality; Aristotle's thinking on the subject is demonstrated in his twelve books of *Metaphysics* and especially in books four, seven, nine, and twelve.

⁴ See also, Berger and Lukman (1979). It is interesting as well to note Jean-Louis Comolli's argument that "[i]f the social machine manufactures representations, it also manufactures *itself* from representations – the latter operative at once as means, matter, and condition of sociality" (1996, p. 108).

description of what reality is, it will use the term in Bertrand Russell's sense, as "the close connection between the perceptions of one person and the (roughly) simultaneous perceptions of another that makes us believe in a common external origin of the different related perceptions" (1985, p. 25). In the context of this specific project it is useful to add the temporal nature of this "common external origin" (ibid.), for many aspects of reality become outdated and change in time.⁵ As Bertolt Brecht put it, "[r]eality changes; in order to represent it, modes of representation must also change" (1980, p. 82). This notion of reality can better serve the specific project because of its clarity and its connection with reality's perceptual as well as conventional origin.

The terms 'truthfulness' and 'truth' are used in this project in the Platonic sense derived from Plato's writing about representation through painting (Republic, 595a-599c). In this light, appearance is different from, and even opposite to, truth.⁶ Calvinist minister Frederick W. Robertson, in the same Platonian manner, in order to differentiate veracity and truth preached the following: To be veracious, for someone, only requires that someone to utter her convictions, her words and thoughts to correspond. However, "to be true, it is needful that [her or] his convictions have affinity with fact."⁷ Even if affinities "with fact" *cannot be guaranteed by anything*, cinema can afford to escape from the bonds of mere appearance and move closer to the truth of the matter. By the use of sound, the recording of movement, the use of text and narration and, most

⁵ An example of reality's temporal nature is the abolishment of Claudius Ptolemy's geocentric model of the universe, which was dominant since the second century A.D., in favour of the heliocentric model put forth in the sixteenth century A.D. by Nicolaus Copernicus. For more than thirteen centuries people were staring at the night sky and they thought they knew all these stars were moving around the earth. A basic and long standing aspect of reality proved to be completely false.

⁶ Emile De Antonio seems to agree with Plato when he states: "by the way you make your collage you hope that you achieve an element of reality that is more real than the real material you started with" (in interview by Jonas Mekas, in New York, on November 6th, 1969, m. 02).

⁷ A year before he died, Robertson made this distinction in his preaching about *The basis of the kingly rule of Christ*, in which he also uses the notion of truth as equivalent to this of reality (1852). Available at: <http://www.fwrobertson.com/sermons/ser20.htm> (Accessed: 01 September 2012).

importantly, the juxtaposition of individual images cinema can describe reality in a veracious, if not truthful, manner. By making available relevant information on the wider socio-historical context, documentary can shed light on aspects of living experience that do not lend themselves to a ready visual or aural register, enhancing documentary film's evidential force, in order to elevate its status as a source of knowledge in the digital era.

Apart from the widespread "scepticism toward the traditional claims made for documentary's powers to see and to know" (Renov, 1993, p. 07), there is an ongoing debate on whether there is a meaningful distinction between fictive and non-fictive cinematic works at all. According to Trevor Ponech, since in any case of filming there is at least one camera which records everything within its viewing angle, all recordings can equally be read as records of the historical reality, whether what is in front of the camera is constructed or found and selected. In this sense no distinction can be made between fiction and non-fiction films. For Ponech, a meaningful base for such a distinction can be drawn from linguistics and in particular from the notion of the film author performing a communicative act by using 'illocutionary force' in order to express her beliefs. To put it simply, what makes the difference in a cinematic work of non-fiction is the sole intention of its creator for the work to be regarded as such (1999, pp. 08-10). This project, however, does not employ a theoretical framework taken from linguistics because, even if film is language-like, despite the opposition of a great many film theorists, cinema is not "a linguistic mode of representation" (ibid., p. 21). Instead, in this project, the distinction of fiction and non-fiction film is thought in accordance with Noel Carroll, who, despite considering that "films are indexed by their creators, producers, distributors, etc. as belonging to certain categories" (1996a, p. 232), finds a meaningful distinction between fiction and non-fiction films in that "[n]onfiction refers

to the actual world. Thus, in principle, there could be evidence for each of the knowledge claims that such a film makes” (ibid., p. 238). This is in contrast with fiction film which “refers to segments of possible worlds” (ibid.), therefore requires no factual evidence. Carroll’s idea of non-fiction is crystal-clear and, although he distinguishes it from fiction, his view reasonably incorporates films like *The Thin Blue Line* (Morris, 1988), with its heavy re-enactments, or *The War Game* (Watkins, 1965), an ‘if’ documentary, into the corpus of documentary filmmaking.

Furthermore, documentary filmmaking is considered in this thesis as a complex communicative act involving four parts:

- The person responsible for the film (usually the director or the producer).
- The film itself.
- The distributor of the film.
- The spectator of the film.

Florian Thälhofer, the creator of useful software for creating database-narratives, which he called the Korsakow-system,⁸ provides his own footage through his databases and thus considers himself as the author of his work despite the interactivity and extended user-freedom involved.⁹ But the notion of the author applies when one person can be held creditable, and accountable, for the whole work, which is why Brent MacGregor considers the creator of such an interactive work as an info-architect rather than an author (Blassnigg, 2005, p. 105). Even if Thälhofer is right, and his claim on the authorship of his work is justifiable, it is certainly not the case when the footage of the database has not been shot by the creator of the database herself but selected from other sources. To describe the particular case of the creator of a documentary database who

⁸ Available at: <http://www.thalhofer.com/> (Accessed: 06 September 2012).

⁹ Available at: http://www.korsakow.com/ksy/pages/udk_thalhofer_ENG.html (Accessed: 06 September 2012).

uses found footage as her raw material, in this thesis, we will call her the ‘initiator’ while to describe the viewers-users, who can alter the arrangement of the elements of the database, we will adopt the term ‘viewers’ as coined by Greg Roach in *New Scientist* magazine in 1995 (p. 30). Through the interactivity, and the shared authorship it brings to documentary, the conventional formulation of documentary address that Nichols has described as “I [the filmmaker/author] speak about them [the world] to you [the viewer]” (2001, p. 13) now becomes: We (the viewers/co-authors) speak about us (the world) to us (the viewers/co-authors).

C. Filmic Verisimilitude.

During the early years of the invention of the photographic image, painting was regarded as a more accurate means of representation than photography for the main reason that the photograph could not describe the movement of an object on the move. On the one hand, photographers inevitably had to freeze their subjects, denying their temporal dimension, while, on the other, painters could better depict the feeling of movement by adopting certain painting techniques.¹⁰ Later on, however, the capability of the moving image to reproduce movement surpassed that of painting and thus the cinematograph became the main instrument for acquiring verisimilitude. As we shall see in Chapter I and throughout the thesis, truthfulness, regarding the cinematic image, has been described from the very birth of the cinematograph in many ways, even in conflict with each other. The first steps towards the moving image were taken as an aid to the human sight in order to overcome its limitations and analyze the natural

¹⁰ For a most enlightening account of this issue see the conversation of Auguste Rodin with the writer-sculptor Paul Gsell, especially the chapter on movement in art as well as on realism in art (Rodin, 1983).

movement in a way the human eye was unable to.¹¹ This thirst for knowledge through the unveiling of what is hidden from the imperfect human vision survives to date through films like the semi-scientific *Microcosmos: Le peuple de L'herbe* (Nuridsany and Pérennou, 1996). Actuality film in the form of newsreels can be traced back to 1895, in Lumière's 'actualités', which were records of everyday life, shot mainly for commercial and amusement purposes (Kracauer, 1979, pp. 30-32). The technical innovations of the pioneers of the moving image took a more commercial path and cinematograph became more closely connected to the spectacle, the extraordinary, which could be captured and presented to the amazed audiences again and again.¹² After the early years of Lumière's cinematograph, audiences' astonishment by the ability of the new medium to record and project aspects of everyday life had slackened. The pure scopophilic pleasure of the first actuality films was enriched by the pleasures of knowledge and understanding and, as we shall see later, that is how the history of documentary filmmaking begins.

D. The Chapters of the Thesis.

The first Chapter of the thesis presents a brief, selective, historical overview of documentary film-making and surveys the way documentary theorists and practitioners perceived reality and the creation of meaning with cinematic means since the introduction of the cinematograph by Lumière brothers in 1895. As we shall see in Chapter I, during the turbulent times in the aftermath of the Bolshevik revolution, in a

¹¹ Among others, the works of Étienne-Jules Marey (1830-1904), with his chronophotographic gun, and Eadweard J. Muybridge (1830-1904), with his set-up of multiple photographic cameras, clearly demonstrate the close connection between the newly born moving image and the scientist's project.

¹² As we shall see in Chapter II, in 1896, the young poet Maxim Gorky, reporting on a local Lumière show in his hometown newspaper, described the amazed response of the audience of the time to the dawning medium of cinematograph in a most picturesque manner (2006, pp. 06-10).

high modernist environment, the newly born Soviet Union became a fertile field for experimentation in editing and the various ways it produces meaning. For the early Soviet cinematographer, as mentioned in Chapter I, filmic truthfulness was to apply meanings to the urgent socio-political conditions of the time. For John Grierson and the state-sponsored British documentary movement of the late 1920s, it was to inform and educate, using an authoritative, speech-centered approach which relies on the kind of narration that is called today the voice of God. In the late 1950s cinematic veracity was regarded as an objective description of actuality, with (Cinéma Vérité) or without (Direct Cinema) the revealing, or the active interference, of the cinematographer and her crew.

As we shall see in Chapter II, after the digital revolution, cinematic veracity has become an even more complicated issue, for there is no need for the existence of a prior event or object to be recorded on film and the cinematic image is constituted by a series of bits and bytes, or a series of 1s and 0s, which combined can form any imaginable image. In the second Chapter, we attempt to investigate the influence of digitization on the current conditions of production and consumption of the documentary idiom. We analyze the internet's potential usefulness, in documentary image-making as well as note some of its problems. We discover threats for the democratic and emancipatory potential of the new medium. As well as we try to gain an understanding of the rising culture of Remix, of what it is to participate in the huge, fluid discussion by which the creativity of ordinary people is released.

In Chapter III, three case studies of films involving massive civilian movements are analyzed in order to investigate and evaluate their truth-telling strategies. *This is What Democracy Looks Like* (Friedberg and Rowley, 2000), *Into the Fire* (Dicks, 2011),

Bahrain: Shouting in the Dark (Welsh, 2011). In the above three documentaries we witness how the voicing of people's opinion is treated by two modern Western democracies as well as a Middle Eastern kingdom. The content of the case studies sheds light on the context of the practical elements of the thesis (PaR), which also involve a massive civilian movement. All of the case studies have been digitally produced and take advantage of the sharing culture of Remix on a basic level. As we find out, the basic sense of Remix can be identified with the compilation documentary. All three case studies under scrutiny follow the hybridization trend of current documentary production and do not follow any particular set of rules of the examined documentary movements. Their creators, by incorporating several strategies and combining different formal elements, affect the evidential status of their cinematic creations. Although, as we confirm, truth in documentary "is [not] handed over by stylistic choice" (Morris, 2004), formal choices, in relation to the content they provide, prove to be able to affect documentary's evidential force. As Chapter III illustrates, documentary film's truthfulness lies not only in its accuracy but also in its completeness. In the case studies, we also highlight the dangers that digital documentary film-making can present to its filmed subjects as well as issues of ethics which are discussed further in the final Chapter.

Chapter IV, the final Chapter of the thesis, consists of two parts. In the first part, we approach the recorded events, and the demonstrators' perceived status of the world, through the content analysis of the practical elements of the thesis and the case studies, as well as with help from other documentary films which are able to shed light on their mind-set. In the second part of the final Chapter, the practical elements of the thesis are reflected upon and conclusions are drawn based on the inquiries of the thesis as a whole. The PaR of this study attempts, in its own terms, to place the spectator in the

middle of the described events in order to guide her heart and mind through experiencing them.

E. Methodology.

The methodology envisioned for this study takes the form of a written thesis and Practice as Research (PaR). Although PaR in film studies has only a short history of about nineteen years, and there is an ongoing debate within the academia about issues of best practice, it is critical that elements of PaR be used in this study if the questions examined are to be effectively explored and the findings better illustrated. However, neither the produced short films nor the created website devoted on it can investigate the extent to which new technology in general and interactivity in particular lead to the emancipation of documentary film. As we shall see later, this area provides a fertile field for future researchers and further research.

The written thesis includes an extensive historical and theoretical overview of issues regarding cinematic realism and the postmodern as well as critical writing on documentary film in order to investigate the aims and methods of three documentary movements, Dziga Vertov's Kino-Eyes (Kinoki), John Grierson's British Documentary movement, as well as the Vérité movement, as exemplified by two of its branches: Direct Cinema and Cinéma Vérité. This choice is not meant to imply, even less to suggest, that those movements alone are worth researching. If nothing else, the omission of Vérité movement's third branch, the Canadian Cinéma Direct, would be enough to deconstruct such an argument. Quite on the contrary, several films, as well as notions of documentary film-making, have produced interesting and important results in countries

like Japan, or Iran, or in Latin America, since the early days of the cinematograph (Chanan, 2007, pp. 185-200). However, as Chanan argues, it is “largely true that the West has historical primacy” (ibid., p. 185), although this is not meant to diminish the value of documentary production outside the Western world. It is merely a choice of exploring the most coherent and rich documentary traditions, as fully as possible, with the minimum amount of overlap, in both practical and theoretical terms. Furthermore, while there is great value in movements like the German avant-garde, or films like Georges Franju’s *Hôtel des Invalides* (1952) in France, among many others in Europe and in the USA, they either do not belong in the documentary proper or have not produced a broad theoretical body of work on the questions this thesis attempts to answer. According to Jim Leach and Jeannette Sloniowski, this also applies to the films of the above mentioned Canadian Cinéma Direct which, despite their important contribution to documentary cinematography, have been under-theorized (2003, p. 3). Thus, the issues they raise are frequently covered by the broad, fertile, theoretical work produced by the other two branches of the Vérité movement. The surveillance of the above mentioned field of critical writing on documentary film does not take the form of a formal literature review but it has been incorporated within the constructed arguments throughout the thesis. Apart from its exploration of the history of documentary film-making, this thesis is also informed by critical reflection on my own PaR.

In addition to the analysis of theoretical paradigms and practices, the written thesis incorporates three particular case studies of recent films on protests and riots.

- The first of the case studies is *This is what Democracy Looks Like* (Friedberg and Rowley, 2000), a compilation documentary about the World Trade Organization (WTO) demonstrations in Seattle, Washington, in 1999. It has been chosen for its

relevancy to all movements mentioned in Chapter I as well as with the current culture of *Remix* described in Chapter II.

- The second case study, *Into the Fire* (Dicks, 2011), is a documentary description of the demonstrations that took place during the G20 summit in Toronto in 2010. Although it is relevant to the first case study in terms of form, albeit in a less sophisticated manner, it incorporates more self-referential elements than the first and provides a valuable insight to the common subject of the case studies.
- The third case study concerns a TV documentary on the revolution in Bahrain, currently under military law. *Bahrain: Shouting In the Dark* (Welsh, 2011) has been chosen because it is the only documentary record of this important as well as fairly recent incident.

Multiple-case studies, as a strategy, is considered useful to this research because it satisfies “the three tenets of the qualitative method: describing, understanding, and explaining” (Tellis, 1997). The use of a common subject in all three case studies of the thesis follows a replication logic which allows comparisons and cross-examinations, of the individual elements, in order to achieve a deeper understanding of why specific documentary strategies were used and in what ways. Conflicts have always been a favourite subject for documentary filmmakers and commissioning bodies alike, because in times of conflict there is a great need for the kind of information that images, in their graphic detail, can provide in order to shed light on the depths of human nature in its cruellest as well as its finest manifestations. That is why a large body of documentaries on war exist, portraying nearly every major war conflict in human history after the invention of photography, forming the documentary sub-genre of war-documentaries.

Furthermore, the protests and riots depicted in the case studies, as well as in the PaR of the thesis, best serve the purposes of this project as a subject because of their extremity, and “extreme cases often reveal more information because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229).

By using material on the same subject as the case studies, the practical part of the thesis adds to the exploration of digitization and whether or not the working methods it introduces can be used to enhance documentary’s evidential status. The practical elements of the thesis are three short documentary films and a website dedicated to them. Apart from the footage that has been shot by the author of this text during thirty four consecutive hours, the short documentaries also include found footage drawn from a range of sources available on the internet. Special attention has been paid to keeping the production costs of the practical elements as low as possible, which may have its own special significance, since, through its inexpensiveness, and its consequent wide availability to the general population, digital technology may lead to an unprecedented democratization of documentary filmmaking as well. Raw footage as well as extra-iconic information, such as on-screen text, are made available through the short films in order to accommodate three basic tenets of documentary filmmaking:

- The conveyance of “the feeling of being there” (Leacock in *Cinéma Vérité: Defining the Moment*, 2006, m. 12) and the use of “real people in undirected situations” (Stephen Mamber cited in Bruzzi, 2000, p. 70) as Direct Cinema and Cinéma Vérité demand.
- The need to educate and inform the modern audience by presenting a creatively treated actuality (Grierson, 1966, p. 13).
- The idea of temporal editing as a generator of meaning, which comes from the Soviet school.

While quite a lot of material on the subject is available on the web, some of it did not lend itself to the building of the films so easily. The main problem with this material is often its poor quality. Regarding this problem, however, a loss in the quality of the images is tolerable for this project, which does not have commercial aims and gives absolute priority to the meaning rather than the appearance of the image. Furthermore, as we shall see in Chapter IV, different image qualities are helpful indicators for the use of material found on the WWW; therefore, for the embracement of the exciting culture of Remix. Other problematic issues the practical elements of the thesis had to deal with are the ownership of the footage found and incorporated as well as ethical issues regarding abuse of the filmed subjects by the film-maker. In the cases of copyrighted material for which permission of use could not be obtained, the found footage could still be used under the umbrella of the existing British Fair Use Policy, as described in the present copyright law in Great Britain, which gives the right of using an amount of 10% of the whole work for academic research purposes. Questions about mistreatment of the filmic subjects by the film-maker date back to the dawn of documentary and, as we shall see through the rest of the thesis, the current digital environment causes the reaffirmation of those questions in new and critical ways.

Another question that has often been raised concerns the use of still and/or moving pictures in social research. Even though many social science researchers suggest that they can be of great value because they “can carry or evoke three things – information, affect and reflection – particularly well” (Rose, 2007, p. 238), it seems that “there is no clearly established methodological framework to discuss the uses of photography in social science research” (Howard Becker cited in Rose, 2007, p. 239). However, like still photography, the twenty four frames per second of the moving pictures have “a long tradition in visual anthropology” (Rose, 2007, pp. 237-238) in answering research

questions. As all research methods do, moving pictures have strengths as well as weaknesses. Their ultimate strength derives from the fact that moving images “encode an enormous amount of information in a single representation” (Grady, 2004, p. 20) and that information is

never merely [audio-]visual but in fact conjure[s] up synaesthetic and kinaesthetic effects, for the [audio] visual provokes other sensory responses. The textures and tactilities, smells, atmospheres ... together with the signs and objects they accommodate, can be empathetically conjured up by [audio-]visual material (Edensor, 2005, p. 16).

In other words, moving pictures’ value lies in the wide range of data they can provide that written and spoken words, by themselves, cannot. On the other hand, the use of moving pictures as a method of social research has two main weaknesses that relate to each other; the first is the possibility “that the spectators of the work ... will simply be baffled by the photos, rather than convinced by them or moved by them” (Rose, 2007, p. 250), and the second is that “in order to make sense... photos need accompanying text” (ibid.).

CHAPTER I

I. A. A Short Prologue to Chapter I.

Questions about the relation between film and reality have been put forward over and over again, by film practitioners and film theorists alike, all over the world since the dawn of cinematography and still remain a fervent topic. The notion of reality itself presupposes a certain belief in an existing world, either as an objective fact or as a set of possibilities mediated by human intelligence or human imagination (Williams, 1980, p. 1).

As mentioned in the Introduction, the moving image at first was considered as a means of representing the visible with scientific accuracy. Of course, as Malcolm Turvey argues, film technology can reveal aspects of reality not accessible to human vision much like the microscope and telescope do. However, in his view, films are able to reveal the invisible in a different sense as well. They reveal truths that we *are* in fact capable of seeing unaided, but which were previously ignored or even concealed (2008, p. 128, emphasis added). In other words, cinema is capable of escaping the mere appearance of things and situations in order to reveal their essential truth, their true reality, which is not perceivable through appearance but is hidden, according to Christopher Williams, behind political, “historical, technological, aesthetic and sociological factors constantly [in] jostle with each other” (1980, p. 3).

I. B. The Soviet Montage Cinema.

Although there are a few exceptions, like Edward S. Curtis's early ethnographic film *In the Land of the Head-Hunters* (1914), restored and re-titled *In the Land of the War Canoes* (1972), and Robert Flaherty's legendary *Nanook of the North* (1922), the documentary proper began with the early Soviet film-makers soon after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. In particular, it began with the first Dziga Vertov film *Kino-Eye* (*Kinoglaz*, 1924), the first known feature-length film of facts that was not scripted, had no actors, was socially conscious, and relied, to a certain extent, on its argumentative force (Hicks, 2007, p. 19).¹³ As we also saw in the Introduction, documentary film-making in the form of newsreels can be traced back to Lumière's *actualités*, but it is in the early post revolutionary Soviet Union that documentary cinema showed awareness of its potential and was regarded as an important tool for social manipulation and construction for the first time. As Vladimir Ilyich Lenin remarked: "of all the arts, for us cinema is the most important" (cited in Taylor and Christie, 1994, pp. 56-57). From the beginning of the Bolshevik uprising to the Cultural Revolution and further beyond, leaders of the early Soviet society, like Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and even Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin as we shall see in the end, valued cinema so highly because they considered it a suitable vehicle for education and propaganda. "As a documentary record, film could preserve the excitement of great accomplishments (like the October revolution itself), transmitting to future generations the sense of mass participation and revolutionary commitment", William Rosenberg explains (1990, p. 102). What the Soviet leaders valued in cinematography is, in essence, the significant role that it could play by placing individual relationships in a broader political framework that may be

¹³ According to Jeremy Hicks, Vertov had developed in newsreels a "sharply rhetorical style, downplaying the registering of events... so as to construct an argument", since 1922's *Cine-Pravda* no.1 (2007, p. 7),

called political consciousness or propaganda. George Sadoul argues that “if propaganda is the connection between work of art and the social and political situation, the essential character of the Soviet school is exactly propaganda” (1980, p. 216). Furthermore, the cinematic experience was thought all the more valuable for its potential to be an effective instrument of manipulation of both the literate and the illiterate, like the average worker and the peasant of the time in the Soviet Union. Hence, Trotsky in his article “Vodka, the Church, and the Cinema” concluded with the cry: “Here is an instrument which we must secure at all costs!” (cited in Rosenberg, 1990, p. 109).

The Lumière brothers' cinematograph was introduced to the Russian public in 1896. Before the October revolution in 1917, the constituent elements of Russian cinematography were mainly melodramas and farces with plots drawn from literature and history (Reader, 1985, p. 32). The revolution transfused new blood to the cinematographic industry, people passionate about cinema, most of them having previous education in already established scientific fields. Three of them are on the forefront: Lev Vladimirovich Kuleshov, David Abelevich Kaufman or Dziga Vertov,¹⁴ as he named himself, and Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein. Their most important contribution to world cinema is the idea of using montage to produce meaning in cinematographic sequences. According to Sadoul, cinema pioneer George Méliès was shooting in Opera Square, in Paris, but when the Madeleine-Bastille bus was passing by the film jammed and he was forced to stop the shooting in order to release the film and manage to make it roll undisturbed again. When he commenced the shooting once again, at the same spot, instead of the bus it was a hearse that was passing. Later on, when projecting the footage, Melies saw in great astonishment that the bus had been

¹⁴ “...until 1993 all works on him claimed Vertov’s name was Denis Arkadievich [Kaufman]. This was in fact a russified name adopted in the context of intense anti-Semitism. A 1918 questionnaire proves he was in fact born David Abelevich” (Hicks, 2007, p. 138).

transformed into a hearse (cited in Kracauer, 1979, pp. 32-33). If the above story is true, then that very day, before 1900, cinematic trickery as well as cinematic montage were discovered by accident. For the first time in the written history of cinema, filmic time was not identical to normal time. Although Melies might have discovered montage accidentally, in practice, Kuleshov was probably the first person to describe the term “montage” in relation to film, when he wrote in 1917:

to make a picture the director must compose the separate filmed fragments, disordered and disjointed, into a single whole and juxtapose these separate fragments into a more advantageous, integral and rhythmical sequence, just as a child constructs a whole word or phrase from separate scattered blocks of letters (cited in Taylor and Christie, 1994, p. 41).

Apart from Kuleshov, Soviet cinematographers-theorists of the new generation “all emphasized montage as the basis of cine-poetics” (Stam, 2000, p. 38). Thus, they established montage as a key aspect of the newly born cinematic language. As we shall see next, this was not by accident.

Immediately after the eruption of the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 and during the civil war between the red (revolutionary) and white (counter-revolutionary) army in 1918-19, the cinema industry was disorganized. The head film producers either escaped abroad, taking with them all their equipment and –in most cases- production teams, or stopped making films and hid their equipment and film stock in fear of nationalization of their property, thinking that the revolution shall soon be defeated. More or less, the same applies to projection room owners. It was in this environment that film theorists and practitioners were struggling to experiment with the new medium of cinematography in order to discover its essence, the means of expression which make cinematography a

distinct art, the *sine qua non* of cinema. It is legendary that “Kuleshov was forced to put his students through the motions of making ‘films without film’: in other words, they acted out the films that they would have made had the equipment been available” (Taylor, 1998, p. 34). Given that the supplies of film stock and equipment were rare to find and the feed of new supplies from abroad had come to a halt, Soviet film-makers of the time had to shoot with great sense of economy and editors were forced to edit fragments of the same footage in various films; every frame, every scrap of film had to be used again and again and that was the beginning of the compilation documentary: “a major new genre of documentary [which] was introduced [later] by Esfir (Esther) Shub” (Ellis and McLane, 2005, p. 35). In June 1918, the revolutionary authorities gave an order to all the remaining private film companies, requiring them to register their stock material with the government (Thompson and Bordwell, 2003, p. 120). “By July 1919 production stopped due to lack of positive stock to make prints for distribution” (Roberts, 2000, p. 17).

At those turbulent times, it is safe to assume that the Soviet cinematography, despite its inquiries on form and aesthetics, was a highly political cinematography, rooted in the Marxist-Leninist theories, aiming to serve the revolutionary cause of fighting the inequality and the oppression of the people. As Graham Roberts put it: “It is valid to suggest that the Soviet masters... should be seen as *political* film-makers... They all certainly claimed to be making political films” (2000, p. 37, emphasis in the original). In other words, the reality that Soviet cinematography was struggling to describe was the sociological and political situation of the time. In a symposium on the Soviet Documentary, the screenwriter and critic Osip Brik illustrated what this endeavour entails in the following passage:

[W]hen we say that the reflection of reality must be filmed, this
does not mean to set the camera up on the street and go away, but to

reflect reality from a definite point of view (cited in Jacobs (ed.), 1979, p. 36).

This definite point of view is what Vertov called “the communist decoding of the world” (1984, p. 42)¹⁵ and the primary means to achieve this goal was to use the ultimate manipulative power of montage. All Soviet cinematographers of the new generation, despite their differences and disagreements, had reached an agreement on that. For Kuleshov, recognized by many as the founding father of Soviet cinema and founder of the first film school in the world, montage and its capacity to manipulate the spectator’s thoughts and feelings by linking and combining individual shots in sequences, giving them meaning and rhythm through organization, is what distinguishes cinema from other arts (Stam, 2000, p. 38). Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, and Grigory Alexandrov signed a manifesto on sound in 1928 in which they declared that montage “has become the indisputable axiom on which the worldwide culture of the cinema has been built” (Eisenstein, 1964, p. 257).

Vertov, who arguably was the most ground-breaking of them all, edited all of his Kino-Eye films during the entire process of production. Within this constant process of montage he distinguished three stages.

- The first stage was the inventory of all data related to the theme.
- The second stage was a shooting plan as a result of selection and sorting out of the observations and/or reports on the theme.
- The third stage was the central editing: the handling of the footage to be placed in a rhythmical order so that all links of meaning coincide with the visual links, resulting in a visual equation or visual formula (Vertov, 1984, pp. 88-90).

¹⁵ According to Lev Manovich, one of the meanings behind Vertov’s notion was to show the signs of a perfect (communist) future all around the imperfect reality of the country. In his own words: “To decode the world in such a way means to recognize the future all around you” (2001, p. 203).

Hicks notes the relevance of Vertov's work to the avant-garde, Futurism, Constructivism and Productivism theories and to the association of intellectuals around the Left Art Front (LEF) journal, all blooming at the time. But this issue will be explored further in the next section. It is of relevance here to note that the importance of those theories fairly applies to the entire Soviet montage school and its structure "according to the norms of music, rhetoric and poetry" (Hicks, 2007, p. 3).

The famous 'Kuleshov experiment' which led to the term 'Kuleshov effect' is a basic principle of montage and it is of great relevance to the Constructivist theories. The experiment is very simple. It involves a static close-up shot of the well-known Russian actor Ivan Mozhukhin looking at the camera with a neutral expression, immediately followed by a shot of a plate of a steaming soup. Then the same close-up of Mozhukhin's face was joined with a shot of a coffin in which lay a dead woman. Then Mozhukhin's close-up was followed by a shot of a little girl playing happily. In each of the three combinations, Mozhukhin seemed to stare at the object to come in the next shot. Pudovkin, who was Kuleshov's student, a member of his team, and an eyewitness to the experiment, describes the reactions of the audience when they watched the combinations as a remarkable result. They enthusiastically praised Mozhukhin's acting, pointing out the heavy pensiveness of his mood over the soup, how touching was the deep sorrow with which he looked at the dead woman in the coffin, and how they admired the light, happy smile with which he stared at the girl at play. But in all three cases the face was exactly the same (Pudovkin, 1949, p. 140). Although simple, the above experiment was a crucial one because it proved that it is the cinematic technique, and in particular the manipulative power of montage, that moves the audiences, not some kind of truthfulness inherent in the image. Another important experiment of Kuleshov was based on leading the spectator to infer spatial or temporal continuity from

in fact unconnected shots by not providing a scene's establishing shot. This technique often relied heavily on the eye-line match (Thompson and Bordwell, 2003, p. 122). This, too, is a crucial element of cinematography even today. In practice, it means that if we watch a man shooting with a gun, immediately followed by a shot of a woman lying down dead, we automatically infer that the man shot the woman dead. Of course, the shot of the woman could have been filmed a few months before the shot of the man at a place as far as the North from the South Pole from him.

"Kuleshov claimed... that he taught Vertov", (Roberts, 2000, p. 16) who was equally excited by the potential uses of montage when he wrote in 1923:

I am Kino-eye. I am a builder. I have placed you, whom I've created today, in an extraordinary room which did not exist until just now when I also created it. In this room there are twelve walls shot by me in various parts of the world. In bringing together shots of walls and details, I've managed to arrange them in an order that is pleasing and to construct with intervals, correctly, a film-phrase which is the room (Vertov, 1984, p. 17).

If the film-phrase is the room, then the film-words must be the shots of the walls and the details, and the montage would be the film-syntax. That early linguistic approach to the cinematic medium was Kuleshov's approach which was adopted by the whole Soviet montage school.

Despite Kuleshov's great influence on the Soviet school, he and Vertov did not see eye to eye. Kuleshov was fond of the American style of cinematography, particularly that of D.W. Griffith. Hollywood cinema had developed a cinematic approach with short and snappy shots, clear and rapid storytelling and continuity montage through invisible

cutting (Stam, 2000, p. 39), all of which resulted in a carefully designed dramatic effect. On the other hand, Vertov makes a statement by starting his modernist masterpiece *The Man with the Movie Camera* (*Chelovek s kinoapparatom*, 1929) with the following on screen text:

The first exploration of
life caught unawares
the first non-artificial cinema object
without
scenario
without
actors or studio

Vertov and the Kino-Eyes struggled against the Hollywood star system and called for the overthrow of the “immortal king and queens of the screen” in favour of the “ordinary mortal, filmed in life at his [or her] daily tasks”. For him, films should be as “useful as shoes”, in opposition to the “artistic drama” (cited in Stam, 2000, p. 46). In fact, Roberts informs us, “Vertov saw documentaries as the *only* valid form of film” (2000, p. xiii, emphasis in the original). Vertov himself manifested his opposition to fiction film in no uncertain terms:

We proclaim the old films, based on the romance,
theatrical films and the like, to be leprous.

- Keep away from them!
- Keep your eyes off them!
- They're mortally dangerous!
- Contagious!

(1984, p. 7)

According to Seth Feldman, the above is what Vertov contributed most to the Soviet film theory: his “absolute belief in the power of nonfiction film” (1998, p. 45).

While Vertov and his Kino-Eyes were searching for a pure cinematic method, non-artificial and solely based on facts, Sergei Eisenstein (who was Kuleshov’s student for a short period of time) established the Kino-Fist as opposed to the Kino-Eye. Eisenstein, as Robert Stam put it, was “the most influential of the Soviet montage-theorists... [in Eisenstein] the prestige of the films and the prestige of the theory went hand in hand... Eisenstein opted for an anti-naturalistic cinema based on the powers of pictorial composition and stylized acting” (2000, pp. 39-40). In the beginning he introduced the “montage of attractions”, in which he favoured aggressive shots hitting the audience like “‘a punch in the stomach’ in order to move the spectator’s emotions” (Thompson and Bordwell, 2003, p. 130). Later on, in his “Methods of Montage”, he described his montage typology as consisting of five forms:

- Metric (when the shots are joined together according, solely, to their length).
- Rhythmic (when the shots are joined together according to their length and content).
- Tonal (when the shots are joined together according to their light or graphic tonality).
- Overtonal (here montage grows out of the conflict between the dominant tone of the shots and the overtone).
- Intellectual (a complex overlay of all the above forms of montage).

(Stam, 2000, p. 42).¹⁶

¹⁶ For visual examples on four of the montage strategies that Eisenstein has suggested, visit the relevant page on the website of “The College of Communication and Information Sciences at The University of Alabama”. Available at: <http://www.tcf.ua.edu/classes/jbutler/T112/EditingIllustrations.htm> (Accessed: 15 April 2012).

Eisenstein accused Kuleshov and Pudovkin of arguing that shots are bricks which can be put one above the other to build a film. But bricks do not interact with each other. For him the shots were montage cells.

Just as cells in their division form a phenomenon of another order,
the organism or embryo, so, on the other side of the dialectical
leap from the shot, there is montage. By what, then, is montage
characterized and, consequently, its cell- the shot? By collision.
By the conflict of two pieces in opposition to each other
(Eisenstein, 1977, p. 37).

That was the essence of the cinematographic montage for Eisenstein: the conflict, the collision between two images that produces new meaning that goes beyond both in the spectators' mind (Thompson and Bordwell, 2003, p. 130).

What Sergey Tretyakov points out, in 1927, about the arguments and differences between Eisenstein and Vertov can be equally applied to all the Soviet cinematographers-theorists of the time; they were men working for the same purpose, but with different methods (cited in Jacobs (ed.), 1979, p. 29). As we have seen earlier, their purpose was to spread the word of Marx and Lenin in order to change the world through their art. However, their experimental spirit would soon be repressed by the political mandate of the Cultural Revolution and the Socialist Realism dominance in art. When Stalin spoke to the Thirteenth Party of the Congress in May 1924, he proclaimed: "The cinema is the greatest means of mass agitation. The task is to take it into our hands" (cited in Taylor, 1979, p. 643). That was the end of the flowering Soviet cinema. After 1924 the New Economic Policy was over and, gradually, the Stalinist regime crushed experimentation. Aleksandr Ivanovich Krinitsky's slogan that films should be "comprehensible to the millions" became a nightmare for the film-makers, as "simply"

and “clearly” became the motto of the cinema press. The accusations of “Formalist madness”, “elitism”, and “idealism” became a commonplace and the Soviet montage school gradually came to an end (Roberts, 2000, pp. 28-31).

I. B. 1 Dziga Vertov and the Kino-Eyes.

This section attempts to answer the question: Was Philip Rosen right when he named Dziga Vertov “the cartographer of the path not taken” (cited in Hicks, 2007, p. 4)?

As we have already seen, Vertov initiated his film-making career after the First World War was over and the revolutionary era in Russia had dawned. These were turbulent times in terms of both political and artistic context. We have also seen that most Soviet cinematographers-theorists, certainly the important ones, shared the same respect for the value of montage in film production. In addition, despite their disagreements on several issues, they were all struggling to discover the *sine qua non* of cinema. Yet, they were not alone in this quest for this is “the central task of classical film theory: to prove that the cinema is an art” (Turvey, 2008, p. 15), “on a par with, or perhaps even superior to, the other arts” (ibid., p. 3). Vertov, and the Soviet montage school in general, like most film theorists before the 1960s, were devoted

to the doctrine of medium specificity, the view that in order for the cinema to be accepted as a legitimate art, it must be shown to possess valuable attributes of its own, ones that the other, preestablished arts do not have (ibid.).

Although late Vertov has written that “[t]he very term ‘art’ is counter-revolutionary in essence, since it shelters a whole caste of privileged people, who imagine themselves to

be not people but the miracle workers of this same ‘art’” (1984, p. 92), in his first manifesto he tried to define the essence of his art through a description of his own technique:

Kinochestvo is the art of organizing the necessary movements of objects in space as a rhythmical artistic whole, in harmony with the properties of the material and the internal rhythm of each object.... Everyone who cares for his art seeks the essence of his own technique (Vertov, 1984, p. 8).

Perhaps, it was not the term “art” *per se* that Vertov objected to, but, as Siegfried Kracauer put it, it was rather the traditional, misleading use of it, as derived from the already established fine arts, which disregarded cinema’s “recording obligations” (1979, p. 39). Furthermore, it is the human labour behind the cinematic apparatus that evokes Vertov’s admiration, since, for a Marxist-Leninist like him, “art is not magic, it is labor” (Feldman, 1998, p. 43). The young scientist,¹⁷ poet and musician (a piano and violin student in his youth) considered himself a film labourer and struggled to “establish definitely that there is no border between artistic and non-artistic labour” (Tsivian, 2004, p. 94). In his own words:

A millionth of the inventiveness of every person in everyday work already contains within it an element of art, if we are to reckon with that label... there is no distinction between artistic and non-artistic labour (Vertov cited in Hicks, 2007, p. 18).

In the previous section of this chapter we noted the relevance of Vertov to the modern movements of his time, like Constructivism, Futurism, Productivism, Formalism, and

¹⁷ Vertov began studying medicine in Petrograd Psychoneurological Institute in 1916. “For his studies of human perception, he recorded and edited natural sounds in his ‘Laboratory of Hearing,’ trying to create new forms of sound effects by means of the rhythmic grouping of phonetic units” (Dawson, 2010).

the Avant-garde. This is evident in everything he writes and all of his cinematic work, from the beginning until the late 1920s, when he was increasingly marginalized by the Stalinist regime in politics and, later, by the Socialist Realism regime in the arts. His allegiance to the flourishing modernist movements of his time (especially the Avant-garde, Constructivism, and the Italian Futurists) can be seen in his chosen “Futurist pseudonym ‘Dziga Vertov,’ a term which can be roughly translated as ‘spinning top’ or ‘spinning gypsy’” (Feldman, 1998, p. 41). It is also manifested in his friendship with the great Soviet Futurist poet Vladimir Mayakowski (ibid.) and the circle of intellectuals around the LEF journal, as well as in his close association with the Structuralist artist-architect Vladimir Tatlin (Roberts, 2000, p. 101). It becomes apparent in his futurist worship of the machine,¹⁸ and it is evident in his “contempt for the classic arts” (Feldman, 1998, p. 41), especially for literature and theatre “whose methods the old cinema used” (Gillespie, 2000, p. 71).

In his important study *Doubting Vision: Film and the Revelationist Tradition* (2008), Turvey argues that Vertov (1896-1954), Jean Epstein (1897-1953), Béla Balázs (1884–1949) and Siegfried Kracauer (1889–1966) all share a certain kind of scepticism about human vision and a strong belief in cinema’s power to reveal important truths about reality that otherwise remain hidden from human beings. Their scepticism about vision derived from their conviction that “the human eye is incapable of seeing them [those hidden truths] unaided due to its limitations” (2008, p. 4). Two of them were film theorists as well as film-makers (Vertov and Epstein), the other two film theorists only

¹⁸ Vertov’s absolute belief in the power of the machine to overcome human limitations is evident everywhere in his writing. The following passage is just one example among a great many.

“I am kino-eye, I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, show you the world as only I can see it. Now and forever, I free myself from human immobility, I am in constant motion, I draw near, then away from objects, I crawl under, I climb onto them” (Vertov, 1984, p. 17).

(Balázs and Kracauer), and all four's theoretical work took shape during the 1920s, when modernism was at its peak. Turvey calls them "revelationists," and their legacy to film theory "the revelationist tradition". He also acknowledges a division of their work into two branches, the naturalist branch (Vertov and Epstein) and the culturalist branch (Balázs and Kracauer). While the former maintain that people are not able to see certain aspects of reality because the human eye is intrinsically flawed, the latter argue "that it is cultural forces at work in modernity that prevent people from seeing reality or aspects of it" (ibid., p. 8). Both claims, according to Turvey, not only distinguish cinema from the other arts, satisfying the requirements of the medium specificity doctrine to which they all subscribed, but also create a coveted role for the art of cinema: "to reveal important truths about reality that human beings cannot see and know, much like scientists do using visual technologies such as microscopes and telescopes. Film is a vital art, they could claim, because it enables mass enlightenment" (Turvey, 2008, p. 109). Vertov's notion of the limitations of the human eye echoes Henri Bergson's theory of the limitations of sight (ibid., p. 37). Bergson "exerted a major influence over Soviet artists in the 1920s" (ibid., p. 36) and, although there was a linguistic and cultural turn in the Anglo-American arts and humanities in the 1960s which led film theorists to endorse the inescapability of human subjectivity, the revelationist tradition has been reasserted "by semiotic-psychoanalytical film theorists, Stanley Cavell, proponents of the so-called modernity thesis, and Gilles Deleuze" (Turvey, 2008, p. 14).

According to Vertov, cinema is able to overcome both of human vision's basic limitations which prevent human beings "from seeing the true nature of social reality" (Turvey, 2008, p. 32). Cinema triumphs over the eye's first limitation, that human visual perception lacks organization and clarity, through the "precision with which editing can be used to organize visual phenomena recorded on film into harmonious

patterns” (ibid.). According to Vertov, the second limitation of human vision is that the eye is limited to the present, and its movement through space is slow, while understanding social reality calls for a much greater freedom from the limits of time and space. This human eye’s second limitation is defeated by cinema by setting the eye free of its temporal and spatial immobility (Turvey, 2008, p. 33). Cinema, for Vertov, is superior to the eye because it is capable of moving instantly through space and time (Deleuze, p. 81), “between citizens engaged in different activities in different places at different times throughout the Soviet Union” (Turvey, 2008, p. 56); and because, by the use of precise editing, the cinema is able to “link these disparate subjects into intelligible patterns” (ibid.). Turvey, in his thorough investigation, concludes on that matter that cinema, like the other visual technologies, is able to reveal otherwise imperceptible truths about reality, but

the cinema does not do so by escaping the eye’s limitations or developing new perceptual faculties in us, as theorists in the revelationist tradition argue. Rather, it *augments* our already existing capacity to find out about the environment around us using our eyes (2008, p. 113, emphasis in the original).

According to Carroll, the film-maker not only has to grasp the audience’s attention but also “needs to shape and guide it” (2003, p. 34). To this end, film is able to crucially manipulate its audience through what Carroll calls “variable framing.” This is achieved through major cinematic devices like

- Editing
- Camera movements

Or minor devices like

- The close up shot (emphatically) and the iris shot

- Different lenses
- Zooms
- Variable focus

Film also uses several methods which it has in common with the theatre and the other visual arts. Aiming to manipulate the audience's attention, these techniques include the use of colour;

centrally positioning the most significant characters and events;
movement, especially against a static background....; sound,
especially dialogue; variable illumination, including
spotlighting; an economy of set details in order to minimize
distraction; placement of major characters in arresting
compositions, such as along diagonals; gesture, as a subcategory
of both movement and dialogue; make-up, costuming, and so on
(Carroll, 2003, pp. 34-35).

Editing, camera movement, and what Carroll calls "lens movement" serve as the mechanical bases for variable framing and they offer three choices of form for manipulating the audience's attention:

- A. Indexing. Much like pointing.
- B. Bracketing. Excluding and/or including details to be seen in the picture.
- C. Scaling. The object occupying gradually more space on the screen.

(ibid., pp. 34-40).

With the use of these techniques, whether in isolation or in conjunction, "films can direct our attention to details of human behaviour that reveal much that might otherwise remain concealed" (Turvey, 2008, p. 117). Vertov's basic motive, as we have seen, was to depict the particular social reality of his time in a Marxist-Leninist deciphering,

which, supported by the use of certain techniques, can reveal aspects of social reality which otherwise would not have been available to be seen. Apart from his political background, as mentioned earlier, Vertov was influenced by most of the modernist movements of his time and Hicks underlines the relevancy of his work, as well as of the Soviet film school in general, to “the generic conventions of journalism” (2007, p. 3). According to his brother Mikhail Kaufman, Vertov wished not simply to inform the audience with his work but rather to influence its mind and guide it to a certain state (ibid., p. 8). As Hicks pointed out, this was also a characteristic of Soviet journalism, both contemporary and traditional (2007, pp. 8-10).

As is evident in his seminal work, *The Man with the Movie Camera* (1929), Vertov would be willing to use any technique, even any trickery available at the time, in order to fulfil his task (Manovich, 2001, p. 211). For revealing reality with the purpose of changing it, Vertov, as we have seen, was convinced that the only valid form one could use is the form of the unstaged, the documentary form. Early on, Vertov recognised the culprit of performance, which could downgrade documentary’s argumentative force, and he issued certain instructions in order to minimize performance on field. In his first field manual for the Kino-Eyes he urges them to follow one or more of the following strategies:

1. Filming unawares...
2. Filming from an open observation point... (at the right moment).
3. Filming from a hidden observation point.
4. Filming when the attention of the subjects is diverted naturally.
5. Filming when the attention of the subjects is artificially diverted.
6. Filming at a distance.
7. Filming in motion.

8. Filming from above.

(Vertov cited in Hicks, 2007, p. 25)

As we shall see when analyzing the practical elements of the thesis in Chapter IV, a ninth strategy has been made available with the same purpose by today's wide availability of hand-held, lightweight, recording devices.

9. Filming from an open observational point among many other recording devices pointing at the subject from different angles.

Furthermore, Vertov suggested to the Kino-Eyes the essential conditions (in terms of equipment and personnel) they had to have on field in order to support the above strategic devices:

- Fast transportation means
- Film stock of high sensitivity
- Mobile, lightweight, hand-held cameras
- Lightweight lighting equipment
- Fleet-footed cinema reporters

(Vertov, 2004, pp. 74-75)

Unfortunately, Vertov's needs of equipment were ahead of his time. The cinematic apparatus (especially for synchronous sound recording) was still cumbersome and, to a great extent, immobile and film's photo-sensitivity was low. As we shall see later, it was not until the late 1950s when such machinery was developed and, when it did, it kick-started the *Vérité* movements in North America and Europe.

In 1921, Lenin declared the New Economic Policy (NEP); through the new policy's mixed economy, which allowed limited private ventures, the Soviet Union recovered financially to an extent and the production of films became possible again. In this

tolerant socio-political atmosphere, experimentation in arts grew and flourished (Feldman, 1998, p. 46). Vertov developed his technique both as an editor and as a filmmaker through various projects he undertook at the time, such as his first work in *Cine Week* newsreels (Kinonedelia, 1918-1919), a number of documentary projects in which he re-edited footage from the Cine Week to make historical compilations, as well as his shooting and screening trips on the *agitprop*¹⁹ train ‘October Revolution.’ According to Hicks, this was the time when Vertov became familiar with the traditional Russian journalistic approach to newsreels, which had little argumentative power and was based mainly on film’s evidential status as a record of the visible world (2007, pp. 5-6). After the declaration of the NEP, Vertov initiated the *Cinema-Truth* (Kinopravda, 1922-1925) newsreel series, elevating the argumentative force of his work and at the same time downgrading the registering of events, developing a “sharply rhetorical style” which extended the traditional model of Russian journalism (Hicks, 2007, pp. 7-8).

Following the example of the Bolshevik newspaper, Vertov put his efforts into establishing a net of film-makers, acting as correspondents as well as distributors, whom he called the Kino-Eyes (Kinoki). His goal was to establish a vast network of ordinary people, with little or no experience in film-making and minimum training before the action, who would provide footage (in the raw or collectively edited), and also participate in the exchange of the finished films nationwide. For the first realization of his idea in a feature documentary film he chose to enlist the Pioneers (Soviet scouts - Bolshevik youth) to make *Cinema-Eye* (Kinoglaz: Life Caught Unawares, 1924) (Feldman, 1998, p. 46). According to Vertov’s plans, while being filmed, the Pioneers should be taught how to make films themselves and be part of his network (Hicks, 2007,

¹⁹ Propaganda trains, usually containing printing facilities and filming equipment, also carrying theatre groups and film-makers shooting and exhibiting films in order to inspire and guide ideologically the red army as well as the general population of the areas held by the Bolsheviks (Roberts, 2000, p. 17).

p. 20). Since the Pioneers would have the mission of depicting on film their own daily life, by realizing the Kino-Eye (Kinok) movement, Vertov introduced to the documentary field the participatory documentary as well as the notion of shared authorship in cinema (Hicks, 2007, pp. 16-18), which, as we shall see in Chapter Two, are of great relevance to contemporary work (both theoretical and in practice) involving the use of networks, like the internet, for producing and distributing database-like documentaries authored by their *viewers*.

Needless to say, the above analysis of Vertov's multi-faceted work is by no means exhaustive. Such an endeavour would require a length far beyond the limits of this thesis. For this purpose, excellent scholars like Sadoul, Feldman, Annette Michelson, Vlada Petric, Yuri Tsivian and numerous others who have delved deeply into Vertov's work have dedicated endless time and care; to them we owe our knowledge of Vertov. Out of this treasure, what is of importance here is that Vertov used every technique available, and initiated certain strategies, in order to reveal the true nature of social reality in a way that the human eye is unable to grasp. The above is not only important to this thesis. As we shall see all through the rest of the chapter, Vertov's techniques, filmic strategies, and state of mind have always had a great influence on documentary as a genre, at least in France and North America.

By 1928, Vertov had already re-established and abandoned newsreels, yet the West was just attempting to produce workers newsreels, not in an argumentative manner, but rather in the conventional form of the time. Apart from Joris Ivens, who had worked in the USSR for a short period of time and used some Vertovian stylistic elements in his later work in the USA, documentary film-making in Europe as well as in the USA was guided by the tendencies to stage and reconstruct. However, by the late 1950s, due to

technological progress, Vertov's legacy became absolutely relevant to the Soviet film-makers as well as to those across Europe and North America. Although Vertov had worked in the technologically limited environment of the 1920s and 1930s, his work had a great influence on the technologically advanced environment of documentary film-making in the 1960s. During the 1960s, mobile, light-weight, hand-held, synchronous sound equipment was largely available and Vertov's work became the subject of serious study, both scholarly and in film-making practice (Hicks, 2007, pp. 130-132). As we shall see in chapter II, in the present era with its vast availability of palm-held, colour video cameras able to record sound in synch, and of Personal Computers which can help their users to manage the editing of the recorded footage, Vertov's legacy is of even greater relevance.

Although, under the Stalinist regime, Vertov and his ideas had been gradually marginalized,²⁰ thanks to his research on sound from early on (This thesis, Footnote 17), Vertov was well prepared for the advent of sound in cinema. Moreover, thanks to his stylistic experimentation, the voice-over dominated popular Soviet documentary was enriched by elements of reflexivity. Thus, Vertov established a model cinema that draws attention to itself and "questions its own processes of representation" (Hicks, 2004, p. 46). In the late 1950s, due to the technical advances of the cinematic apparatus, film-makers re-discovered the observational abilities of cinema to which Vertov had been committed from the very beginning. This re-discovery, in turn, led to the three branches of the Vérité movement: the Cinéma Vérité, the Direct Cinema, and the Canadian Cinéma Direct. Jean Rouch was the first to admit Vertov's influence on him when stating: "When Edgar Morin and I decided to make *Chronicle of a Summer* [(*Chronique*

²⁰ Vertov was fired from the Russian Sovkino studios in 1927 and he had to find himself a placement in the Ukrainian VUFKU (All-Ukrainian Photo-Cinema Administration) studios in order to make his masterpiece, *The Man with the Movie Camera* (1929), (Hicks, 2007, pp. 54-55; Roberts, 2000, p. 32).

d'un été, 1961)] a new experiment in 'cinéma vérité', [in Sadoul's direct translation of Kino Pravda,] our sole intention was a homage to Dziga Vertov....I'm one of the people responsible for this phrase [Cinéma Vérité] and it's really in homage to Dziga Vertov, who completely invented the kind of film we do today" (cited in Hicks, 2004, p. 133). Even before the 1960s, "John Grierson's articulation of the socially conscious nonfiction film, the big 'D' documentary, came after Vertov's polemics and early work and owed something to them" (Feldman, 1998, p. 52).

Vertov's legacy also lives in fictional film works, which freed themselves from the bonds of the big studios, like the films of the British Free Cinema and the French New Wave movements, which "were taking cameras into the streets and finding their stories in the lives of ordinary people" (ibid., p. 51). His influence is also obvious in the doctrines of the more recent Danish Dogme '95 movement. Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin formed the Dziga Vertov Group inspired by aspects of Vertov's work. "Their project of making worker-generated political documentaries was perhaps the most apt filmic manifestation both of Vertov's original ideal of merging film-making with industrial labour and of the revolutionary events in France during May 1968" (ibid.). As Roberts points out, Chris Marker could also claim a connection with Vertov's legacy "but he always preferred to stress the influence of Medvedkin" (2000, p. 100).

In a self-interview for MIT press (2003),²¹ Lev Manovich asks himself why he begins his seminal book *The Language of New Media* (2001) with stills from Vertov's legendary film *The Man with the Movie Camera* (1929) and responds that he deliberately decided this arrangement in order to emphasize the close connection

²¹ Available at: http://manovich.net/LNM/Q&A_Manovich.html (Accessed: 01 September 2012).

between the old and new media, and because he “wanted to foreground the avant-garde potential of new media, its promise to create new cultural forms and to re-define existing ones” (2003). Malevich openly admits his conviction of Vertov’s relevance to New Media when he states that, if he was to give a sub-title to his book, this would be “Everything you wanted to know about new media but were afraid to ask Dziga Vertov” (2003). According to Manovich, Vertov’s cinematic work is of particular relevance to new media because “[i]t proves that it is possible to turn ‘effects’ into a meaningful artistic language” (2001, p. 212). In *The Language of New Media* (Manovich, 2001) he characterizes Vertov “a major ‘database film-maker’ of the twentieth century” (p. 209) because he could make a new form out of the combination of database and narrative (ibid., p. 212). The above suggest that a reasonable answer to Philip Rosen’s question about whether the path cartographed by Vertov was taken or not (cited in Hicks, 2007, p. 4) would be that Vertov was the cartographer of many paths, some of them taken to a certain point, some perhaps forgotten, but his work “provides continual incentive to explore other cinematic paths not taken and... [suggests] a model for the exploration of new moving image technologies” (Feldman, 1998, p. 53).

I. C. Robert Flaherty.

At the same time Vertov was practicing his filmic formalist experiments in the newly born Soviet Union, another important figure of the world’s documentary film-making was coming to the forefront, this time in the USA. Robert Flaherty was an American prospector who had spent several years exploring the Canadian North with the help of the indigenous inhabitants of these vast regions. Between his explorations he shot with a film camera fragments from the life of the Inuit, a group of indigenous people who live

in the sub-arctic regions of Canada and Denmark. As Flaherty stated, his only prior experience of filming was “some two weeks with the motion camera demonstrator” (cited in Sherwood, 1979, p. 17). Upon his return from one of those expeditions, Flaherty put together several thousands of feet of exposed film, some of it already edited in short stories, and attempted to structure the whole of this filming material as a film. When the editing was finished, unsatisfactorily according to Flaherty,²² the nitrate film was accidentally ignited and destroyed. Thus, Flaherty secured financial support from the fur-trading company Révillon Frères, and took the same trip into the Inuit territories, this time with the sole purpose of recording the life and habits of the people there, in order to produce a movie. In 1920 he commenced his journey in the land of the Inuit and by 1922 his movie, *Nanook of the North*, was ready to be shown to the astonished world. According to Lewis Jacobs, it was “the first feature-length film of fact” (1979, p. 7), but, in fact, the first feature film based on factual content was made at least eight years earlier when a film mentioned early in this chapter, Curtis’s *In the Land of the Head-Hunters* (1914), was released. Furthermore, as we shall see next, Curtis and Flaherty had a similar approach to what constitutes a fact in more than one sense.

Both films, *Nanook of the North* (1922) and *In the Land of the Head-Hunters* (1914), were not made in a studio but filmed on location. Both are about the life and habits of exotic communities almost in isolation. Both directors chose members of the local communities, not professional actors, to cast their films. In order to achieve the goal of manipulating the spectator’s mind and feelings, which they shared with Vertov, as seen earlier, both directors of the above films used fictional elements to create a sense of

²² When Flaherty screened, several times, an editing print which had survived the fire, his audience was not very excited about his film. “[H]e later recalled, ‘I was not sorry. It was a bad film. I had learned to explore, but had not learned to reveal’” (Sherwood, 1979, p. 17).

drama in them. Curtis begins the forward section of the book form of his movie by defining his film as “a motion picture drama dealing with the hardy Indians inhabiting northern British Columbia” (1915, p. vii). In 1979, the Burke Metropolitan Museum and the University of Washington, Seattle, produced a short film about Curtis and the production of his film. According to the professors-researchers, George I. Quimby and Bill Holm, by the time Curtis shot *In the Land of the Head-hunters* (1914), the Kwakiutl Indians were already influenced by the Western culture and architecture. Therefore, in order to create his anthropological film, Curtis decided to construct five facades of houses, of the traditional style, on a nearby island. The researchers also present evidence that, apart from building the village scenery, Curtis had purchased or constructed costumes, masks, totems, as well as several props used for the filming. Furthermore, they present witnesses who testify that they had been paid from Curtis’ production budget as actors. In fact, at least some of those who were filmed have earned a salary for their services. In the enlightening short film, the researchers conclude by stating that Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North* (1922) “was made in the same manner” (*The Image Maker and the Indians*, 1979, mm. 06-14²³).

In fact, according to Flaherty’s critics, the researchers are accurate because the Inuit had also been influenced by the Western civilization when the movie was made, and Flaherty also had to build some scenery²⁴ to depict aspects of their traditional culture which were not part of their current day-to-day life. He encouraged the Inuit to wear only traditional clothes, for example, eliminating the optical evidence of “more modern patterns of existence that Flaherty found but did not film” (Nichols, 1991, p. 124). Flaherty also chose the props for his film with the intention not to disclose any level of

²³ Minutes: from-to.

²⁴ Flaherty informs us that, for practical reasons, he had to build half of an igloo to use it as scenery for shooting the interior scenes (1922b).

integration between the Western and the Inuit cultures. For example, even though the Inuit had rifles and did know how to use them,²⁵ Flaherty did not allow rifles to appear in the film among the harpoons, and in the same manner he excluded the motors which the Inuit were already using instead of kayak paddles. Furthermore, Flaherty also paid at least some of those who appeared in front of his lens for their acting services. He paid the members of the Inuit family (Duncan, 1999), who, in fact, according to Jay Ruby, were not relatives at all; just like families in *Man of Aran* (1934), and *Louisiana Story* (1948), they were chosen by Flaherty because they suited his ‘conception of what makes a good Inuit, Aran Islander, or Cajun family’ (2000, p. 144).

Vertov had an interesting view on this kind of staged actuality. Although he, too, had incorporated staged scenes into his work early on, he had denounced, as we have seen, the use of staging, in principle, for factual film-making (Hicks, 2007, p. 26-30). The above is clearly reflected in Vertov’s disagreement with Eisenstein (at a time when Sergei Mikhailovich was attending the Kino-Eyes workshops) over the latter’s concept of “intermediating cinema.” Eisenstein’s conception involved the mixing of staged and unstaged filmic material, in a hybrid method, which Vertov utterly rejected. Eisenstein favoured the idea of “a conscious and active remaking [perekraivanie] of reality” (Eisenstein in Tsivian, 2004, p. 49) through certain aspects of cinematic technique. Vertov regarded such a filmic strategy as not suitable with his own “recording of facts, classification of facts, dissemination of facts, and agitation with facts” (Vertov in *ibid.*), therefore not an option for making factual cinematography.

Although Flaherty did not label his film a drama, as Curtis did, his aim was to tell a story “out of the life of a people” (Flaherty in Kracauer, 1979, p. 247). According to

²⁵ In Flaherty’s words, Nanook’s “companions would remain at either side of me, rifles in hand, whilst I filmed” (Flaherty, 1922a, p. 558).

Kracauer, all of Flaherty's films employ "structured sequences in the nature of an emphatic narrative" (ibid.). Thus, he imposes on his whole work what Rotha calls "a slight narrative" (ibid.), which, as Kracauer put it, "would be something like an interpretative account bordering on poetry" (ibid., p. 249). In the case of *Nanook of the North* (1922), Flaherty's narrative line was about the fight of man with the forces of nature (Sherwood, 1979, p. 16). Richard Barsam suggests that, in fact, "[a]ll of Flaherty's films are variations on one ideal: happiness exists when man is free and lives simply and harmoniously with nature" (1988, p. 7). In this ideal, Kracauer notices the echoing of a romantic, Rousseauan, conviction "that primitive cultures are the last vestiges of unspoiled human nature" (1979, p. 247). According to his long-time wife Frances Hubbard Flaherty, the way to describe Flaherty's *oeuvre* in one word is "'non-preconception,' an explorer's word. Non-preconception is the pre-condition to discovery" (Flaherty, 1960). We shall see later in this chapter that following the story as it occurred, without pre-structuring, became basic tenets of Direct Cinema in the 1960s. As a consequence of the above, Flaherty did not impose a pre-conceived plot on his films but he rather found the story in the life of his subjects and "synthesized the travelogue/expeditionary film with the narrative techniques of the fiction film" (Cousins and Macdonald, 2006, p. 36). Thus, Flaherty allowed his films "to grow naturally out of his experience of the people and the setting" (Armes, 1975, p. 31). In short, Flaherty's films can be described as "documentaires romances", a term employed by Michael Chanan to describe the work of Curtis (2007, p. 30).

Had Jacobs written that *Nanook* was the first feature-length "film of fact" (1979, p. 7) of great *commercial success*, he would have been more precise. Although Curtis's film had a quite remarkable career itself eight years earlier, Flaherty's, within a short time, became a tremendous success for both the critics and the public, thus enabling Flaherty

to make his second film, *Moana* (1926), for Paramount studios, in the USA. On the 8th of February 1926, John Grierson wrote a review of the latter for The New York Sun which he signed as *The Moviegoer*. In his analysis, he stated that “of course, *Moana* being a visual account of events in the daily life of a Polynesian youth and his family, has documentary value” (Grierson, 1979, p. 25). Grierson did not coin the term documentary in the English language with his statement, for it had been employed by Curtis, in a manner similar to its current use, well before Grierson wrote his review of *Moana* (1926). However, his use “is generally considered the first use of the term [documentary] to distinguish non-fiction film” (Rabinowitz, 1994, p. 18). Furthermore, Grierson was the one to spread it worldwide as an alternative term to Vertov’s Cine-Truth (Kinopravda), thus giving a name to the documentary genre (Cowie, 1997). Grierson later defined documentary film-making as “the creative treatment of actuality” (1966, p. 13). According to Alfred Hitchcock, he and other members of his movement called “their films, with stunning unoriginality, documentaries” (Hitchcock on Grierson, 1965, m.s. 07:30²⁶). We shall investigate, in the next section of this chapter, Grierson’s legacy to the British Documentary Movement as well as to the genre of documentary in general.

Flaherty’s work, which included reconstructions and biases, also raised ethical questions regarding exploitation and mistreatment of the people filmed (Winston, 1995, p. 21) As Robert and Frances Flaherty remember, during his days of filming, several of his amateur actors and collaborators were put in danger. In the scene of the walrus hunt in *Nanook of the North* (1922), when the Inuit hunters pleaded with him to stop the filming and help them with his rifle to take the prey, he was only interested in the camera crank and he pretended he did not understand (Flaherty, 1922b, p. 557). In order

²⁶ Minute: Second.

to record the prey taken the traditional way, Flaherty endangered the Inuit hunters. During the filming of the same film, Frances Flaherty informs us of an episode of a failed two week bear hunt in which the whole filming team, Flaherty included, was put to the danger of starvation; no optical evidence of this adventure appears in the final film (Flaherty, 1960). A third example is found in several scenes of people dealing with the waves of the turbulent Atlantic ocean in *Man of Aran* (1936); in Flaherty's own chilling words: "I should have been shot for what I asked these superb people to do for the film, for the enormous risks I exposed them to" (cited in Rotha, 1983, p. 116). Throughout his book, 'Claiming the Real,' Brian Winston considers the ethical stance of the documentary film-maker as a crucial question and is particularly interested in reinserting ethical concerns into the discourse of the realist documentary project. Winston argues that this kind of disengagement of the artist from her or his subject echoes the philosophies of idealism and aestheticism (1995, pp. 26-30), which provided the realist documentary with theoretical justification to avoid serious social engagement by "claiming the privileges of the [creative] artist" (ibid., p. 96). According to Winston, this heritage haunts the realist documentary to the present digital age (ibid.). In the next section of the chapter, Winston's objections on realist documentary's ethical stance will be further elaborated in conjunction to Grierson and the British Documentary Movement.

I. D. John Grierson and the British Documentary Movement.

Relevant to the nationalized Soviet cinema is the British documentary movement, which was also influenced by the political mood of the time and led by the Scot John Grierson (Armes, 1975, p. 34). Most of its work was produced during the 1930s, in the Great

Depression era which “renewed political emphasis on social and economic issues” (Nichols, 2001, p. 32). According to Paul Virilio, the highly influential British documentary school was a state-sponsored education and propaganda mechanism concerned with the colonial Great Britain of the time (Virilio, 1994, pp. 24-25). In his struggle to achieve a cinema that would function as a public service, Grierson was inspired by the ethnographic work of Flaherty, who in turn was influenced by Curtis’s visual ethnography (Winston, 1995, pp. 8-9; Lyman, 1982, p. 92). But instead of Flaherty’s and Curtis’s image-based argumentative force, Grierson developed a more authoritative, speech-centered approach which uses the kind of narration that is called today the voice of God. Brian Winston investigates the roots of the realist documentary and convincingly argues that its origins can be traced in the practices and theories of the French Realist painting school which was deeply influenced by the philosophies of Idealism and Aestheticism (1995, pp. 26-30). As the British documentary movement has a legacy still relevant to documentary film-makers as well as to film theorists, what follows is an attempt to explore and describe the aims and methods of Grierson and his movement.

Grierson’s career presents evidence of two theories of documentary realism, which he developed over the course of his life, indicating a shift, after 1936, to a more functionalist perspective, concerned with propaganda and “civic education” and reflected in a more didactic, journalistic style far from his earlier preoccupation with philosophical aesthetics. What this shift indicates is Grierson’s fading interest in the phenomenological naturalism of the image and increasing concern for the creative treatment of reality, which gave rise to a more directive style already inherent in his early concept of creative treatment. Despite clearly privileging the sociological over the aesthetic aspect of documentary over a period of thirty years (from 1937 to 1967),

Grierson appears to have returned to his original preoccupation with the aesthetic by the end of his life. His 1968 film *I Remember, I Remember* testifies to this return, since it defines documentary almost exclusively on the basis of the artistic qualities it embodies.

Thus, the underlying tension between the aesthetic and the sociological, which always characterized his work but had been downgraded in favour of a more openly didactic, sociological approach, seems to have reverted to the balance characteristic of his early theory of intuitionist, modernist documentary realism. This early theory bears the imprint of various intellectual influences, synthesizing elements of philosophical idealism, mass society theory, Soviet montage, and Weimar film theory into a complex, sophisticated amalgam (Aitken, 2001, pp. 167-168). It is in essence characterized by three principles:

1. As opposed to studio film, documentary would describe “the living scene and the living story”, in an expressive artful manner.
 2. Documentary film would not only describe but also interpret on screen the “complex and astonishing happenings in the real world” by the use of editing.
 3. “[M]aterials and... stories... taken from the raw can be... more real in the philosophic sense... than the acted article”
- (Grierson, 2006, pp. 97-99).

These principles are not only found in Grierson’s early film theory but are also exemplified in some of the films of the British Documentary Movement created between 1929 and 1935. The poetic montage style of films such as *Drifters* (1929) and *Song of Ceylon* (1934) are characteristic examples (Aitken, 2001, p. 167).

Grierson’s theory of documentary film was initially expressed in writing in 1927, in an unpublished paper consisting of two parts. The first part was entitled *Notes for English*

Producers, while the second part was entitled *English Cinema Production and the Naturalistic Tradition*. In the second part of his paper, he proposed two types of film production according to film length. The first of his film production categories comprises films of seven to nine reels while the second consists of films with an approximate length of four reels. According to Grierson, this second category would aim at depicting “social interconnection in both primitive cultures and modern industrial society” (cited in Aitken, 2001, p. 166). Grierson was able to produce this second type of films almost exclusively because of his limited state funds and maintained that the sophisticated use of editing and visual composition would introduce a new, better era in film production through the orchestration of the visual material “into cinematic sequences of enormous vitality” (ibid.). Despite the fact that Grierson’s initial conception of the documentary placed significant weight on formative editing techniques, the actuality content of the documentary image remained important as well. This is particularly evident in his distinction between the *real* and the *actual*. Grierson held that the organization of documentary films should aim at using documentary footage and formative editing techniques in order to reveal the *real* that lies beneath the surface of things and can only intuitively be grasped. However, he also believed that, in comparison to the relatively artificial image produced in a film studio, the documentary image that captures actual life is more capable of signifying the *real*, since it has registered and transcribed the “phenomenological surface of reality” (cited in Aitken, 2001, p. 167).

Grierson’s theory of modernist documentary in the 1920s reflects his conviction “that film, and documentary film in particular, could play a crucial role within society by providing an effective medium of communication between the state and the public” (ibid., p. 162). More specifically, Grierson believed that the documentary film could

make democracy effective by keeping the public properly informed, in contrast with the elite managerialism championed by Walter Lippmann, which he considered similar to fascism. According to Grierson, documentary film's task is not to let the public "know everything about everything all the time", but, on the contrary, [documentary] should seek to instil a general, and intuitive, understanding of the significant generative forces active within society" (Aitken, 2001, p. 163). Grierson's anti-rationalist perspective is the corner stone of his early theory of cinematic realism. The development of neo-Hegelian idealism in Britain placed emphasis on "themes of social duty and reform, rule by enlightened elites, and the need to return to the social relations and values of pre-industrial, capitalist England" (ibid., p. 164). According to Aitken, Grierson's conviction that documentary film should be used for aligning the state policies and the public opinion derived from the idealist notion of the harmonic co-operation between a cast of intellectuals and politicians for the purpose of propagandizing the state's priorities to the public. Theories of new mass communication technologies of the time incorporated this idealist notion. A concern with social communication and civic education was, therefore, central to idealist thought, and, after 1918, many idealists, including John Grierson, became involved in the establishment of a public service role for the new social media of radio and film (Aitken, 2001, p. 164).

During his years of studying philosophy at Glasgow University, Grierson became familiar with the thinking of Plato, Kant and Hegel, and became influenced by the works of the idealist-socialist philosopher, A. D. Lindsay, and the neo-Hegelian philosopher F. H. Bradley. In fact, Grierson's theoretical approach to the realist documentary film is particularly influenced by the latter's view that only intuitive experience, as opposed to conceptual reason, can lead to a true understanding of an underlying reality characterized by existential complexity. His contact with the

aforementioned thinkers led him to construct an intellectual position rooted in certain values and convictions. These included his faith in the importance of the State and corporate institutional structures, his rejection of both unregulated capitalism and populist democracy and his belief in the power of intuitive experience to provide greater insight than a rational approach to reality (ibid.).

In that sense Grierson holds a place among Epstein, Balázs, Kracauer, and Vertov, whom, as mentioned earlier, Turvey characterized as Revelationists for their scepticism about human vision and their strong belief in cinema's power to reveal important, hidden, truths about reality (2008, p. 4). Specifically, he belongs to the culturalist branch of what Turvey calls the Revelationist tradition together with Kracauer and Balázs. As was also mentioned earlier, the members of this particular branch believed that true reality is hidden from humans by active cultural forces of modernity (ibid., p. 8). Indeed, Aitken confirms Grierson's great allegiance to Balázs "who argued that film was able to express a poetic reality which existed beyond, but could only be comprehended through, the empirical" (Aitken, 2001, p. 167). In an untitled, undated, paper in which he wrote about *Drifters* (Grierson, 1929), Aitken informs us, "Grierson argued that the empirical content (the actual) of its documentary images was organised so as to express general truths (the real), which existed at a level of abstraction beyond the empirical, and which could not be directly represented" (2001, p. 166).

For Grierson, documentary film is able to reveal those important truths by "representing the interdependence and evolution of social relations in a dramatic, descriptive and symbolic way" (Aitken, 2001, p. 165). Such representation involves both a sociological and an aesthetic component. The former lies in the goal itself – to represent social relationships – while the latter lies in the imaginative and symbolic means through

which this goal is achieved. According to Grierson, the documentary film was ideal for representing the interconnected nature of social relationships; it was “the medium of all media born to express the living nature of inter-dependency... [for its outlining of] the patterns of inter-dependency more distinctly and more deliberately than any other medium whatsoever” (cited in Aitken, *ibid.*). What characterizes the most important early films of the British documentary movement, which exemplified Grierson’s conviction, is the combination of descriptive information with the often prevalent impressionistic techniques that aim to convey “a poetic sense of unity and fusion” (Aitken, 2001, p. 166).

Despite the fact that “Grierson’s writings after 1930 suggest that the main model for the documentary film movement was the socially purposeful cinema of Turin and Pudovkin” (Aitken, 1992, p. 118), and although he commented on Vertov’s *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) that it is “not a film at all: it is a snapshot album” (Grierson, 1966, p. 127), Grierson and Vertov shared several features regarding their film-making stance. According to Jack C. Ellis, Grierson’s attitude can be described as follows:

[I]f people at work in one part of the Empire are shown to people in the other parts, and if a government service is presented to the population at large, an understanding and appreciation of the interrelatedness of the modern world, and of our dependency on each other, will develop and everyone will want to contribute his or her share to the better functioning of the whole (2001).

If Ellis’s argument is true, then Grierson and Vertov had a basic goal in common because Vertov, as mentioned earlier, worked in the agitprop trains for the purpose of helping “to acquaint inhabitants of the various farflung areas of the Soviet Union with each other’s mode of life... [in] a brilliant attempt at unifying the vast and shattered

nation” (Barsam, 1992, p. 66). Later Vertov tried to depict “the communist decoding of the world” (1984, p. 42) by developing a net of film-makers/correspondents in order to bring forward the interconnectedness of the people of the working class in support of each other.

The textile worker ought to see the worker in a factory making a machine essential to the textile worker. The worker at the machine tool plant ought to see the miner who gives his factory its essential fuel, coal. The coal miner ought to see the peasant who produces the bread essential to him (Vertov, 1984, p. 52).

The two men, arguably, also met in their formalistic experimentations. Although Grierson was far less radical than Vertov in that respect, his “search for shape and form” (Hitchcock on Grierson, 1965, m.s. 06:15) and his painterly “abstract sophistication” (ibid., m.s. 34:30) echoes Vertov’s great experimentation in form. A good example of the above is the sequence which records the fishing nets dancing in the air as thrown at the sea in *Drifters* (Grierson, 1929, mm. 14-15). Furthermore, both Grierson and Vertov tried to make socially conscious arguments with their films. They both shared the conviction that cinema is able to reveal aspects of reality which humans cannot comprehend by other means. Both of them also believed in the power of non-fiction film as opposed to fiction film,²⁷ and were repelled by the popular, illusionist, Hollywood cinema (Leach and Sloniowski, 2003, p. 5). According to both, filming on location, not in a studio, and using real people instead of actors are absolute canons of documentary film-making. Even though Grierson accused Vertov of “exhibitionism,” and *The Man with the Movie Camera* (1929) as lacking “dramatic

²⁷ Grierson went so far as to state that “the choice of the documentary medium is as gravely distinct a choice as the choice of poetry instead of fiction.... the young director cannot, in nature, go documentary and go studio both” (2006, p. 98).

structure” (Grierson, 1966, p. 127), in his minor manifesto “First Principles of Documentary” he expressed his denial of the use of a preconceived scenario for filming the actual, as Vertov denied filming according to a specific scenario altogether. Furthermore, they both valued editing tremendously for its power to interpret actuality, by juxtaposing fragments of the actual, in order to reveal the real which is hidden behind the appearances. They also shared the innovation of distributing and exhibiting their films in various ways and not just through the dominant channel of film theatres. Thus, they both reached a wide audience in “the [P]arsons and... the church halls” (Aitken, 1998, p. 189), in fact, making their films available “in the maximum possible number of prints and shown everywhere” (Vertov, 1984, p. 49). This innovation, as we shall see later in this thesis, anticipates today’s conditions of distribution and exhibition through digital channels like the DVDs and the internet.

Aitken confirms Winston’s remark, about the influence of idealism on Grierson, linking Grierson’s theory to the German philosophical Idealism in particular (Aitken, 2001, p. 163). According to Winston, the influences of Idealism and Aestheticism shaped Griersonian documentary “from working methods to subject matter, and from purpose to justification” (1995, p. 26). Grierson claimed that in documentary’s “use of the living article, there is also an opportunity to perform creative work” (2006, p. 98). However, in Winston’s view, his use of the word creativity was actually a way to claim the privileges of the artist, which allowed the realist documentary to avoid serious social engagement (1995, p. 96). Winston considers the late-Victorian rhetoric about artistic privilege as partly responsible for the lack of ethics in general in the realist documentary because, according to this stance, “[t]he film documentarist is [regarded as] selective and thus creative, creative and thus artistic, and artistic and thus, to a certain extent, absolved from the everyday norms of moral and ethical behaviour” (Winston, 1995, p.

24). Of course, according to Rotha, Grierson used to avoid the word art in relation to documentary and he often replaced it with words like “information and public service” (cited in Aitken, 1998, p. 155), but this, Rotha continues, was a marketing tool in order to promote the documentary to civil servants for whom artistic efforts were rather indifferent (cited in *ibid.*). Alberto Cavalcanti, another film-maker and Grierson’s colleague, subscribes to this view when he writes that for Grierson “documentary was a kind of name that pleased the government” (cited in *ibid.*, p. 190). The prolific writer and critic Arthur Marshall has blatantly put it by characterizing Grierson’s rhetoric in general as “sales talk” (cited in Winston, 1995, p. 58). Distinguished editor and critic Dai Vaughan explains Marshall’s comment when he asserts that “Grierson’s statements... were not meant to make sense. They were meant to make things happen” (cited in *ibid.*, p. 59).

According to Winston, making “things happen” had a price to be paid and this price was the limiting of the political analysis of the documentary to what was acceptable to its funding body and forcing the film-makers to live with the editorial problems of sponsorship (Winston, 1995, p. 83). This was a heavy price because sponsors (whether the State or private parties) imposed their political agenda upon the sponsored film (*ibid.*) to the point that “the final film always reflected the sponsors’ politics” (*ibid.*, p. 93). Grierson himself admitted the above when he wrote: “in these days, political issues are such that [the] personal freedom so many innocently seek cannot readily be expected where government funds apply and inevitable propagandist effects on mass audiences are involved” (cited in Aitken, 1998, p. 120). For Winston, “[s]ponsorship meant self-censorship”, which led to the adoption of strategies like “[b]alance”, and the “problem moment” structure, which covered up the social ill by failing to expose the causes and effects of the problems depicted in the film (1995, pp. 42-43).

Sponsorship and, as we saw earlier, the claiming of the privileges of the creative artist caused the detachment of the realist documentary from the social problems of the time. This running away from social meaning is a characteristic shared with many other official films that were “made officially” such as the Nazi Germany’s *The Triumph of the Will* (Riefenstahl, 1935), or the Stalinist Soviet Union’s *Turksib* (Tourin, 1929), (Winston, 1995, pp. 74-78). For example, the documentary film movement avoided the Great Depression as well as the advance of Fascism in Europe (ibid., p. 79), which is confirmed by the remark of Lord Tyrrell (President of the British Board of Film Censors) in 1937: “We may take pride that there is not a single film showing in London today which deals with any of the burning questions of the day” (cited in ibid., p. 59). The above justify Winston’s claim “that no ‘serious sociological analysis’ can ever be provided by the Griersonian documentary because of the flight from social meaning implicit in the form” (1995, p. 135). Aitken also seems to add to this point of view when noting: “Grierson’s insistence that intellectuals and film-makers must not step beyond what he called the ‘degree of general sanction’ effectively ruled out fundamental criticism of the basic institutional structure of society” (Aitken, 2001, p. 165). For example, *Industrial Britain* (Flaherty *et al.*, 1933) “vividly demonstrated how to run from the social meaning of British industry – concentrate on individuals and thereby avoid the alienating and repetitive realities of the world of work” (Winston, 1995, p. 38). Thus, Winston plausibly concludes that ‘*running away from social meaning* is what the Griersonian documentary, and therefore the entire tradition, does best” (ibid., p. 37, emphasis in the original).

Hitchcock informs us that upon his return from his years of studying in the USA, Grierson “gathered around him a group of brilliant young men” (Hitchcock on Grierson,

1965, m.s. 15:10), “mostly middle class and well educated” (Ellis, 2001), and formed the Empire Marketing Board’s (EMB) film unit, which produced a series of documentaries from 1927 to 1933 under his leadership. “Basil Wright, Arthur Elton, Edgar Anstey, and Paul Rotha were among the early recruits; Stuart Legg and Harry Watt came later, as did Humphrey Jennings” (Ellis, 2001). Flaherty, the young poet Wystan H. Auden and the distinguished composer Benjamin Britten were also among Grierson’s brilliant recruits. When the EMB was dispersed, in 1933, he moved together with his team to form the General Post Office’s (GPO) film unit, which functioned until 1937. “Alberto Cavalcanti joined the group shortly after it moved” (ibid.) to the GPO and, when Grierson left Great Britain he became the leader of the group. Grierson, at the EMB and later at the GPO, trained these young film-making enthusiasts, according to his theory, in terms of ideology as well as technology and aesthetics (Ellis, 2001), giving flesh to the British Documentary Movement. In 1937, Grierson with his team left the GPO to found the Film Centre in order “to enlist sponsorship from private industry” (ibid.) and to make “the cinema vital outside the area of commercial profit-making,” which, according to Hitchcock, was a considerable achievement (Hitchcock on Grierson, 1965, m.s. 15:30). During those years, apart from the practical outcome of over three hundred films, Grierson transmitted his theory “to New Zealand, Australia, and later South Africa, all of which established national film boards” (Ellis, 2001). In 1939 he went to Canada, “where he drafted legislation for the National Film Board and became its first head” (ibid.) until 1945.

Grierson and the British documentary movement’s work “influenced many documentary film-makers, not only in Britain and Canada but throughout the world” (Ellis, 2001) and, as we shall see later in this thesis, its legacy remains important today. Documentary film-makers still struggle for finance and for their freedom of speech, as

they struggle with marketing issues and questions of aesthetics and purpose. As mentioned earlier, Hitchcock found the movement's success in securing the production of their films through State and private sponsorship a considerable achievement. For Ellis, their independence from the box-office for their financing "was a key innovation in the development of documentary" (2001). Another innovation the British Documentary Movement should be credited with, according to Winston, is introducing the filmed interview. *Housing Problems* (Anstey and Elton, 1935), in its attempt to let "slum dwellers simply talk for themselves, make their own film" introduced this important tradition (Winston, 1995, p. 44). As Winston points out, the interview has always been valuable to documentary. As we shall see later, it certainly is of great value today as well.

In the next section of the thesis, we shall explore a radical documentary movement, which was born in North America and France in the late 1950s and flourished in the turbulent times of the 1960s: the *Vérité* movement, which brought forward the notion of objectivity in documentary film-making. Direct Cinema and its legacy, as we shall see next, is extremely relevant to the current documentary film-making. The same applies to the other branch of the *Vérité* movement, *Cinéma Vérité*, which actually is a different approach to documentary film-making because of the reflexive and even provocative stance of its film-makers (Plantinga, 1997, p. 116).

I. E. Cinema Vérités: *The Fertile Seedbed of the Long, Strange Sixties*.²⁸

Direct Cinema and Cinéma Vérité, Two Observing Methods.

The following section of the chapter makes an effort to investigate the birth of the observational stance of film-making, its claims on truthfulness, and its most important characteristics, in relation to the aims and methods of two Vérité movement's branches. Like both Vertov and Grierson, Vérité film-makers had to respond to the urgency of "the social and political upheaval" in the early 1960s (Plantinga, 1997, p. 172). The term Vérité is used often to describe the film-making stance of both Direct Cinema and its contemporary Cinéma Vérité (Ward, 2005, p. 14) but a distinction among those movements is helpful for they are actually different approaches to documentary film-making (Plantinga, 1997, p. 116). Although they share a lot of their characteristics,²⁹ their stances differ from each other due to the non-interventionist and the interventionist attitude they respectively aspire to (Barbash and Taylor, 1997, pp. 28-29). The cinematographic camera of the time, with all its paraphernalia (especially when synchronous sound was being recorded), could not meet the need for the "representations of the real world to be made in real time" (Winston, 1995, p. 143). Therefore, in order for documentary to maintain its claims on the real, the equipment had to be redesigned. That process led to a gradual designing of portable synch sound cameras from the mid 1950s, which in turn gave birth to both Direct Cinema and Cinéma Vérité (ibid.).

After Grierson's famous definition of documentary as "the creative treatment of actuality" (1966, p. 13), in the late 1950s Direct Cinema brought forward the notion of objectivity in documentary film-making. According to Nichols,

²⁸ (Saunders, 2007, p. 192)

²⁹ (Barbash and Taylor, 1997, p. 528, note 17)

British and North American film-makers have placed more emphasis on objective and observational forms such as the “two sides of every argument” tone to much journalistic reporting and the highly non-interventionist approach of Frederick Wiseman in films like *High School* (1968), *Hospital* (1970), and *Model* (1980), (2001, p. 31).

As mentioned earlier, Vertov and his Kino-Eyes, in the infant Soviet Union, were linked to the journalistic ideals of the Russian tradition which called for an upgraded argumentative rhetoric in which objectivity was not an aspiration at all (Hicks, 2007, pp. 8-10). As we shall see next, objectivity, in the sense of fairness and impartiality, was closely linked to the early twentieth century’s ideals of Western journalism.

This kind of objectivity appeared in North America’s press as a reaction to the partisan rhetoric that was dominant during most of the nineteenth century. Until 1900, the dominant rhetoric of the North American press had been one in which “[p]arties and partisanship were seen as intrinsic to a well-functioning democracy... [and] journalism was absorbed into the overly polarized, instrumental world of formal political organizations in their competition for state power” (Kaplan, 2002, pp. 188-189). Far from our current ideas of politics as individual stands and principles, the ideal of citizenship in the late nineteenth century remained one of faith and public submission to the omnipotent political party, whether the republican or the democratic, and to its causes. Thus, the journalists of the time were involved in a situation where their main task was to reflect the prevalent point of view of the political party to which they were committed, in order to inspire, mobilize, and raise sympathy for the party’s purposes among the public. Within that frame, journalists were free to infuse their own views into the presentation of actuality and to filter current affairs through their own politically

committed evaluations in a totally unacceptable way to our present-day journalist culture. Needless to say, in this process there was no room for the individual voices that were struggling to be heard and ever remained unheard because they did not fit the party's ideological bed of Procrustes (Kaplan, 2002, pp. 184-189).

However, the above notions of proper journalist practice have been gradually altered, mainly in connection with two political events and the concomitant changes they brought to American politics. The first one was the post civil war election of 1896 which "displaced parties from their political centrality [and]... permitted newspapers to issue declarations of party independence" (Kaplan, 2002, p. 190). The second was "the early 1900s, Progressive political reform [which led] Michigan and Detroit journalists and politicians... [to declare] the press to be an impartial, expert recorder of the day's most important events" (ibid., p. 191). But given the two words in the above declaration's last sentence: "most important", the idea of objectivity is seriously challenged by two choices that have to be made, first about what is *important*, and second by what criteria *most* should be defined. According to Frederic Wiseman, choice equals bias, prejudice, and subjectivity (2006, p. 279). Noel Carroll argued that although selectivity might make "bias possible; it may in some contexts even invite bias. But it does not *guarantee* bias" (1996b, p. 284, emphasis in the original). Stella Bruzzi however, notes a certain "relaxation of the twin notions of 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity'" (2000, p. 82) caused by selection.

In their effort to avoid the weight of their selections, journalists of the early twentieth century were "[s]eeking hard facts and reliable information ...through executives and officials... [and ended up] assimilated to the role of official interpreter and purveyor of governmental publicity" (Kaplan, 2002, p. 193). As Daniel C. Hallin put it, "the

function of objective journalism was generally to transmit to the public the government's perspective on the world" (cited in Saunders, 2007, p. 23). An illustrative example of the above is Drew's description of an incident in the White House during the filming of *Crisis: Behind a Presidential Commitment* (1963). While he was filming a meeting of President Kennedy with his officers in the oval office, the subject of Cuba came up; one of the generals pointed at Drew and his crew, Kennedy looked at them and smiled, so the whole film crew smiled back and went out. Right after this description, Drew gloats over his presence in the oval office in "a way no camera has been [present] before" (extract from the DVD commentary, m. 13). This stance, arguably, is echoed in the current idea of embedded journalism, as illustrated by the use of journalists attached to military units in Iraq or to police forces during civil upheavals. One of the latter cases is described extensively in *The Miami Model* (FTAA Miami Video Working Group, 2004), a film about the demonstrations in Miami, Florida in 2003.³⁰

That was Drew's journalistic heritage, and ideals like this inspired the birth of the Direct Cinema movement which Drew started in the USA in the late 1950s. In his own words:

The breakthrough in candid film-making that took place in 1960 has been described in the history books in strange ways, with many errors.... The biggest misconception so far is that these films were a result of some coming together of forces and people which was sort of accidental. The fact is that this was not spontaneous, this was thought out and planned over a period of years by someone who worked his butt off to do it, and that was me. (cited in Saunders, 2007, p. 5)

³⁰ Available at: <http://www.moviesdatacenter.com/Movies/The-Miami-Model.html> (Accessed: 6 April 2012).

According to Plantinga, other Direct Cinema film-makers went to great lengths to make it clear that they reject any claim to objectivity in their work, possibly to avoid appearing naïve. David Maysles, for instance argues that it is practically impossible to be “strictly objective in anything that is at all artistic” and states: “I don't think we ever strive for that kind of reality. There is no worth in ‘this is the way it was –exactly’”. In the same spirit, Wiseman “dissociates himself from any claims of objectivity: ‘I think this subjective-objective stuff is a lot of bullshit. I don't see how a film can be anything but subjective. . . . They are not objective, because someone else might make the film differently’” (cited in Plantinga, 1997, p. 118).

In 1958, Drew received funds from Life Magazine to develop lightweight, portable, synchronous sound equipment to use in filming on location. He gathered a skilful team of film-makers including Leacock, an experienced cinematographer by that time who was influenced by the ideas of Flaherty, Don Pennebaker, a young “technologically skilled film-maker who had previously made non-synchronous, short observational films” (Saunders, 2007, p. 10), and Albert and David Maysles, who baptized their unobtrusive technique Direct Cinema and thus coined the term adopted by others. Among them were others as well, like James Lipscomb and Hope Ryden, whose encounter with the newborn Direct Cinema movement was fated to be brief. The team began a series of experiments, with varying degrees of success, and in 1961 reached a set-up in which camera, recorder and the microphone could move independently. Later, in France, Jean-Pierre Beauviala invented quartz-based time marking and liberated the camera from both the tape recorder and the clap. The invention of crystal synchronization became so successful that it enabled Beauviala to establish the Aaton company (*Cinema Vérité: Defining the Moment*, 2006, m.s. 22:10).

Although *Primary* (Drew, 1960) is justly considered the milestone of the Direct Cinema movement, the first film to be produced with the new, fully developed equipment, was *Eddie* (Drew, 1961), a film about Eddie Sachs, a racing-car driver (Barnouw, 1983, pp. 235-244). Drew was an ex-fighter pilot and World War Two veteran before he was hired at Life Magazine, which was launched in 1936. He was hired in 1946 on the occasion of a story about P-80 jet planes and remained at Life Magazine for ten years as a reporter in the state of California. In 1956 he decided to study storytelling at Harvard University and through his studies “he envisaged a new, more perspective type of broadcast journalism with a ‘capacity for mobile reporting on real life in the un-public situations that make up most of what is important about the news’” (Saunders, 2007, p. 8). According to Drew himself, he had not been influenced by Dziga Vertov and his Kino-Eye and he had never heard of Jean Rouch and the Cinéma Vérité movement in France. The greatest influence he recalls was that of Alfred Eisenstaedt (cited in Saunders, 2007, p. 9) and the unobtrusive, candid stance he brought to Life Magazine (Eisenstaedt in *Master Photographers: Alfred Eisenstaedt - Six Part Series*, Adam, 1983).

On the other hand, it was precisely in homage to Vertov and his Kino-Eye that Cinéma Vérité, in France, was named by the anthropologist Jean Rouch (among others) at the same time (Levin, 1971, pp. 134-135). During an interview by Eva Hohenberger, published in Germany in 2006, Trinh Minh-ha responded to a question on different commentary voices in documentary by stating: “what tries to pass for objectivity is often no more than a non-committed stance unaware of its own politics” (in Pearse and McLaughlin, 2007, p. 115). In other words, to Minh-ha this disengaged stance which supposedly leads to a not subjective judgement actually indicates unconsciousness of one’s own politics. Furthermore, she states that “[p]ower relations lay at the core of

normative representations” (ibid., p. 114) which is in complete accordance with Kaplan’s remarks about the interconnected interests of journalism with the powers that be, mentioned earlier. From its archetypal *Chronique d’un été* (Rouch and Morin, 1960) on, Cinéma Vérité, as the Kino-Eye, made efforts to reveal its politics and committed stance through reflexivity or even provocation, towards to more *participatory* tactics. Another case exemplifying the camera’s functioning as an *agent provocateur* is Chris Marker’s *Le Joli Mai* (1963) in which the camera causes things to happen and does not merely reproduce them. On the other hand, both Direct Cinema and Cinéma Vérité took advantage of the recent developments in technology in order to achieve a higher level of cinematic truthfulness by giving voice to real people in real situations and, thus, communicating “the feeling of being there” (Leacock in *Cinéma Vérité: Defining the Moment*, 2006, m. 12).

For Plantinga, Direct Cinema was primarily a product of prohibitions in style and technology which “also extended to practices of structure and editing. However, the observational cinema never settled on a consistent use of structure and editing; film-makers continued to differ in their approaches to the organization of shots and information” (1997, p. 137). According to Leacock, one of the major figures of the Direct Cinema movement, the aspiration of the film-makers was “to find out some important aspects of our society..., by *watching how things really happen* as opposed to the social image that people hold about the way things are *supposed* to happen” (in Jacobs (ed.), 1979, p. 411, emphasis in the original). Leacock continues, “[w]e think we *know* things, but actually these are distorted or completely wrong.... what we are getting is *the formation of self-perpetuated cultural myths*” (ibid., p. 412, emphasis in the original). In other words cinema’s purpose is to reveal important truths about reality that otherwise remain hidden from human beings. Furthermore, these important truths

are hidden from humans by active cultural forces (Turvey, 2008, p. 8). In that sense Leacock also holds a place among the 'Revelationists' sharing their scepticism about human vision and their strong belief in cinema's power to reveal important, hidden, truths about reality (ibid., p. 4). He specifically belongs to the culturalist branch of what Turvey calls the Revelationist tradition together with Grierson, as argued earlier, Kracauer, and Balázs.

According to Alan Rosenthal, in terms of film practice, Direct Cinema varied of course from person to person but its general method conformed to the following rules:

- An evolving story with plenty of incident.
- No prestructuring.
- Following the story as and when it occurred.
- A tremendously high ratio of shooting, up to forty or fifty to one.
- No prompting, directing, or interviewing between the director or cameraperson and the subject.
- Minimal or no commentary.
- Finding and building the film on the editing table.

(2002, p. 266)

To these, Bill Nichols added:

- No supplementary music or sound effects.
- No intertitles.
- No historical reenactments.
- No behavior repeated for the camera.

(2001, p. 110)

In terms of subject matter, Rosenthal informs us, Direct Cinema films “examined personalities, crises, and pop concerts, with some limited political coverage” (2002, p. 266). In terms of the film-maker’s stance Paul Ward calls Direct Cinema’s practitioners at the dawn of the movement “flies in the face of the still-prevailing orthodoxy... [which considered that] documentary should not only consist of ‘natural material’, but that this should appear to viewers as objectively, transparently and ‘undoctored’ as possible” (2005, p. 10). Considering the connection of Drew’s work and ideas with the twentieth century’s ideals of objective journalism that we have seen earlier, Dave Saunders argues that he is “only ‘fair’ in the respect that he offers no great depth of personal analysis, and ‘truthful’ only in his allegiance to an ethos of simple, disengaged visual storytelling, wrought without the potentially controversial imposition of subjective judgement” (2007, p. 23). Bill Nichols, however, challenges the idea of such a “disengaged” attitude when he writes about Leni Riefenstahl’s documentary on German National Socialist (Nazi) Party’s 1934 Nuremberg rally which he considers as “one of the first ‘observational’ documentaries” (2001, p. 113):

[T]he underlying act of being present at an event but filming it as if absent, as if the film-maker were simply a ‘fly on the wall’ invites debate as to how much of what we see would be the same if the camera were not there or how much would differ if the film-maker’s presence were more readily acknowledged. That such debate is by its very nature undecidable continues to fuel a certain sense of mystery, or disquiet, about observational cinema (Nichols, 2001, pp. 114-115).

Thus, Nichols, although admitting that such a stance *invites a debate* and continues to fuel a certain sense of *disquiet*, finds a way out of this flaw in observational cinema’s basic strategy through “personal integrity” (ibid.). But even if we consider it safe to

take for granted the integrity of some film-makers, who are well known and have produced a rich, well studied body of work, what happens with the less known film practitioners?

Issues like the above gave rise to a great disbelief in Direct Cinema's non-interventionist, observational stance. This distrust is echoed in the following statement by the established documentary film-maker Emile de Antonio, who uses the term *Cinéma Vérité* instead of Direct Cinema: "*Cinéma vérité* is first of all a lie, and secondly a childish assumption about the nature of film. *Cinéma vérité* is a joke. Only people without feelings or convictions could even think of making *Cinéma Vérité*. I happen to have strong feelings and some dreams and my prejudice is under and in everything I do" (cited in Bruzzi, 2000, p. 67). Even Wiseman, one of the architects of Direct Cinema, calls his films "reality fictions" (cited in Ponech, 1999, p. 4). Another distinguished documentary film-maker, Errol Morris, has bluntly put it as follows:

I believe that *cinéma vérité* set back documentary film-making twenty or thirty years. It sees documentary as a sub-species of journalism....

There's no reason why documentaries can't be as personal as fiction film-making and bear the imprint of those who made them. Truth isn't guaranteed by style or expression. It isn't guaranteed by anything

(cited in Bruzzi, 2000, pp. 5-6).

The last remark, although understandable as a cry for freedom from the bonds of journalism, is unjust to a cinematic movement which, as Bruzzi put it, "despite the vigorous arguments mounted against it, remains extremely influential, for it freed both the style and content of documentary" (2000, pp. 67-68). For "Direct cinema, [and] *cinéma vérité*... share a reaction against the classical style. Direct cinema and *cinéma vérité* were movements opposed to formal methods of documentary film-making"

(Plantinga, 1997, p. 139), which made verbal efforts to teach and educate, to explain and inform, in order to bring justice to the society (Saunders, 2007, p. 16). It was such methods that had given documentary a bad reputation and had made the word documentary a synonym to boredom (*Cinéma Vérité: Defining the Moment*, 2006, m. 01).

Leacock sounds absolutely excited by “[t]he developments in portable cameras and sound recording equipment... [which] led to a documentary practice that was much more able to exploit the immediacy and ‘behind-the-scenes’ feel of social events and situations” (Ward, 2005, p. 14). In his own words, “[i]t was freedom! Screw the tripod! Screw the dolly! Screw all the stuff; you can move” (Leacock in *Cinéma Vérité: Defining the Moment*, 2006, m. 15)! This excitement which he was sharing with all the other founding film-makers of the *Vérité* movement made them ignore that

the documentarist, like any communicator in any medium, makes endless choices. He [or she] selects topics, people, vistas, angles, lens, juxtapositions, sounds, words. Each selection is an expression of his point of view, whether he is aware of it or not, whether he acknowledges it or not (Barnouw cited in Bruzzi, 2000, p. 4).

They truly believed so much in the “kind of truth that can only be gotten from personal experience” (Drew in *Cinéma Vérité: Defining the Moment*, 2006, m. 19) that they ignored “that staging is an unavoidable part of the film-making process -as unavoidable as pointing the camera at something, editing, using sound - and it is not staging [or dramatic (re)construction] per se that is the problem, but our attitudes towards it” (Ward, 2005, p. 8). The above further confirms the critique of Minh-ha and Kaplan, regarding the interconnected interests of journalism and the powers that be, which was

mentioned earlier. In many cases, our attitudes are dictated by those powers, or whoever has the authority or control of a situation, which poses a major threat to the truthfulness of documentary.

In 1964, shortly after the disintegration of the Drew Associates, Peter Graham declared: “[Drew and his team] present not the truth, but *their* truth. The term *cinéma vérité*, by postulating some absolute truth, is only a monumental red herring. The sooner it is buried and forgotten, the better” (cited in Saunders, 2007, p. 190, emphasis in the original).³¹ However, Direct Cinema is neither buried nor forgotten. Commenting on Direct Cinema’s influence on contemporary documentary film-making, Ward points out

that most of the ‘commonsense’ things that are said about ‘documentary’ actually only really refer to films from the direct cinema stable. The main difficulty is the way that essentialist notions of documentary limit the development and understanding of the form: the features of a certain type of documentary come to stand for the whole of documentary, in what we could term a metonymic relationship (2005, p. 23).

As Cousins and McDonald point out, *Vérité* has now become “a vague blanket term which is used to describe the *look* of feature or documentary films... rather than any genuine aspirations the film-makers may have. As so often, what started as a revolution, has ended up a style choice” (2006, p. 251, emphasis in the original).

³¹ Graham uses here the term *Cinéma Vérité* interchangeably with Direct Cinema.

I. F. A Short Epilogue to Chapter I.

As with Vertov, the above exploration of Soviet Montage, Flaherty as well as the British Documentary and *Vérité* movements is by no means exhaustive of its subjects. The practice and theory of them all has been thoroughly researched and well documented. The humble task undertaken by this Chapter of the thesis was to present the aims and methods they have established, or made popular, which are at the core of documentary film-making. Since the purpose of this thesis is to examine cinematic veracity and its affiliation with facts, it was essential that attention be paid also to their view of reality.

As mentioned in the Introduction, Russell describes reality in social terms, for he argues that it is the connection “*between... perceptions... that makes us believe in a common external origin of the different related perceptions*’ (1985, p. 25, emphasis added). Flaherty and Curtis tried to convey their informed view of often marginal societies, albeit by the vehicle of reconstructed drama. The Soviet Montage School and Vertov were under the influence of the Soviet revolution. Grierson and the British Documentary Movement developed their style in the heart of the Great Depression. The *Vérité* movement flourished during the tension of the 1960s. Indeed, according to this chapter, all of them struggled to describe an urgent social reality regardless of their level of experimentation with meanings and forms. Curtis had to deal with the urgency of depicting vanishing civilizations, and so did Flaherty before he began to work under the social climate created by the Great Depression.

Hitchcock's remark, about Grierson's relation to the camera, reveals aspects of the filming stance of all film-makers discussed in this first Chapter. Hitchcock, in his unique style, comments that "John," and other film-makers like him,

[had] begun to learn that the motion picture camera didn't merely have to reproduce on celluloid anything placed horizontally in front of it. If it was placed in certain ways, with cunning artifice, it could convey emotional aspects of whatever it was filming... [I]t could observe and comment on a changing world..., [in order] to create social documents on film (Hitchcock on Grierson, 1965, m.s. 05:55).

After about a decade of euphoria about the capabilities of the new equipment and techniques and their ability to capture the real, however, the world of cinematography realized that the new conditions were just as unable to communicate the 'truth' as the old ones. According to Winston, reception remained the key to cinematic 'truth' and not some specific representational strategy, or equipment that promises to capture actuality without distortion (1995, p. 253).

Throughout this First Chapter we encountered three basic tenets of documentary film-making:

- The conveyance of "the feeling of being there" (Leacock in *Cinema Vérité: Defining the Moment*, 2006, m. 12) by filming "real people in undirected situations" (Mamber, 1972, p. 79), as both Direct Cinema and *Cinéma Vérité* demand.
- The need to educate and inform the modern audience by presenting a creatively treated actuality (Grierson, 1966, p. 13).

- The idea of temporal editing as a great vehicle for meaning, which comes from Vertov and the Soviet school.

In the next Chapter, we will attempt to investigate the influence of digitization on the current conditions of production and consumption of the documentary idiom. We will analyze the internet's potential usefulness, in documentary image-making as well as note some of its problems. We will discover threats for the democratic and emancipatory potential of the new medium. We will try to gain an understanding of the rising culture of Remix, of what it is to participate in the huge, fluid discussion by which the creativity of ordinary people is released.

CHAPTER II

II. A. A Short Prologue to Chapter II.

As films like *Sherman's March* (McElwee, 1986) and *Fahrenheit 9/11* (Moore, 2004) demonstrate, despite the great influence of the Direct Cinema and the Vérité movements in general, post Vérité filmmakers, as genuine children of the postmodern world, abandoned the notion of truth as a grand narrative and became disinterested in being neutral or objective. In the 1960s, as noted in Chapter I, the notion of subjectivity became dominant in film theory. After 1968, according to Turvey, Louis Althusser, Jacques Lacan, and Bertolt Brecht, drawing from the writings of Marx and Freud, brought the concept of illusion to the forefront of film theory (2008, p. 80). Semiotic-psychoanalytic film theorists maintained that 'humans mistake representations for truth' (ibid., p. 31). Postmodern theory broke with the basic modernist tenet of medium specificity and replaced it with a joyful artistic license which allowed for "all sorts of interbreeding and hybridization" (Rancière, 2004, p. 28). Documentary works, like *The Thin Blue Line* (Morris, 1988), or *Ghosts of Cité Soleil* (Leth, 2006), clearly display their disobedience to former rules and the consequent freedom from formal constraints that allows them to be more subjective and more personal. Although present categorizations are dealing with the conventional forms of documentary address, the documentary idiom has changed tremendously through the current conditions of production and consumption that digitization imposes on it.

Bill Nichols, perhaps the most influential of film scholars, proposed six modes of documentary address [Poetic, Expository, Observational, Participatory, Reflexive,

Performative] (2001, pp. 33-34) in order to distinguish the documentary from other film forms. However, according to Stella Bruzzi, Nichols's categorization "imposes a false chronological development onto what is essentially a theoretical paradigm...., [d]ocumentary has not developed along such rigid lines and it is unhelpful to suggest that it has" (2000, p. 2). As the above and many other films suggest, the mixing and overlapping between these modes is fairly frequent in the current development of documentary, indicating that indeed Nichols's classification is rather problematic.

On the contrary, Michael Renov's four fundamental tendencies of the documentary film still seem of value to the current documentary work. In his view, documentaries aim to do one or more of the following:

- To record, reveal, or preserve.
- To persuade or promote.
- To analyze or interrogate.
- To express.

(1993, p. 21)

Of course, Komatsu Hiroshi was correct in arguing that they cannot serve as a guide for distinguishing the documentary from the fiction film, because they do not "exclude that which is not documentary" (1994). Renov himself admitted it when he wrote in the same essay that "[t]hese categories are not intended to be exclusive or airtight.... [t]hese four functions operate as modalities of desire, impulses which fuel documentary discourse. As such, the record/reveal/preserve mode might be understood as the mimetic drive common to all of cinema" (1993, pp. 21-22).

Yet, even though lines were never rigid, as Bruzzi put it above, and are increasingly becoming blurred, as Nichols holds,³² Renov's canon is still of value as a frame to explore "the creative and rhetorical possibilities engendered by these several modalities.... in order to engage with the wider potential, repressed but available" (ibid.). Also Nichols's brief distinction of documentary as oriented towards *the* world, as opposed to fiction which orientates itself towards *a* world (1991, p. 113, emphasis in the original), is still of value, because film theorists, despite their differences, still agree on the definition of documentary film as a vehicle of adding to human knowledge and there is still a close connection between documentary film and the depiction of actuality.

Since the beginning of the cinematograph, documentary cinematographers were trying to be truthful, according to their filmmaking stance, and they relied on certain filmic strategies in order to achieve their goal. Furthermore, audiences still expect documentary films to be based on a truthful representation of reality and feel betrayed when they finally discover that a documentary depicts a fictional situation.³³ But what constitutes truthfulness in the present digital environment and which strategies facilitate better the veracity of documentary creators? Or, as Brian Winston put it, what is "left of the relationship between the image and reality" (1995, p. 6) in the digital era?

We will approach the consequences of digitization for documentary through analyzing the online-documentary and the changes the internet brings to it. As we shall see later in this Chapter, the internet is of great importance to the documentary because it offers a new, very promising, distribution channel for factual material and it offers a platform

³² See: Bill Nichols's (1994) *Blurred Boundaries*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

³³ An interesting case of many people, in New Zealand, outraged by *Forgotten Silver* (Botes and Jackson, 1995), a 'documentary' which proved to be fake, is described in Roscoe's and Hight's *Faking It: Mock-documentary and the Subversion of Factuality* (2001: 146-150).

for creating documentaries, in an innovative way, at the same time. As a distribution mechanism with revolutionary characteristics and as a public space of expression and participation, the internet allows people to have multiple possible views of not *a* world but of the “one historical world” (Nichols, 1991, p. 115).

II. B. The Origins of the Internet.

The aim of the following text is not to offer a definite solution to the puzzle of the internet’s origins, even less to put forward a concise but complete history of the internet; those aims would be fairly outside the limits of this thesis. It is an attempt to highlight the most important points in the evolution of what today is called the internet, offering a better understanding of what it is and how the emerging opportunities and challenges that the internet is bringing for documentary practice could facilitate the dissemination of factual information among people -an objective which, as we have seen so far in this thesis, is the founding idea of documentary filmmaking.

In order to explore the internet phenomenon, we must have a clear idea of what an internet is. A simple and clear-cut definition is that “[a]n internet is a connection between two or more computer networks” (Bob Taylor cited in Peter, 2004) even of different types. The FNC, in consultation with members of the internet and intellectual property rights communities, developed a definition of the term internet and, on October 24, 1995, announced its final decision.

RESOLUTION: The Federal Networking Council (FNC)
agrees that the following language reflects our definition of the
term "Internet". "Internet" refers to the global information

system that - (i) is logically linked together by a globally unique address space based on the internet Protocol (IP) or its subsequent extensions/follow-ons; (ii) is able to support communications using the Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) suite or its subsequent extensions/follow-ons, and/or other IP-compatible protocols; and (iii) provides, uses or makes accessible, either publicly or privately, high level services layered on the communications and related infrastructure described herein.

(Leiner, *et al.*, 2003)

There is a widespread notion that the internet began as a Pentagon defence weapon against a potential nuclear war with the Soviet Union of the time. Despite the obvious and close connection of the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA)³⁴ to its commissioning body, the Pentagon, this notion, according to Leiner et al., as well as Bob Taylor, the 1965-1969 director of ARPA's Information Processing Techniques Office (IPTO), is a mere rumour (Leiner, *et al.*, 2003, Footnote #5; Castells, 2004, p. 20; Peter, 2004).

There are also several competing theories regarding when the internet was born. The most widely accepted theory traces the beginnings of the internet in the development of the ARPANET and the Packet Switching Theory of the 1960s. Other theorists consider the development of the Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) as the starting point of the internet, since it is the communications protocol suite which

³⁴ "The Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) changed its name to Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in 1971, then back to ARPA in 1993, and back to DARPA in 1996" (Leiner, *et al.*, 2003, Footnote #4). Throughout this thesis we refer to it as ARPA, the agency's first name.

enables different types of multiple packet networks to interconnect and form an internet (Leiner, *et al.*, 2003). Ian Peter points out another three interesting theories of the birth of the internet, to conclude, in his own words, that “[m]ultiple events, multiple players, and multiple points of origin need to be mentioned in any sensible understanding of the emergence of the internet” (2004). This is in agreement with Lister *et al.*’s statement that “the internet came into existence as the result of numerous factors, accidents, passions, collisions and tensions” (2009, p. 163). This conclusion seems reasonable because of the very complex nature of the internet, which involves, on the one hand, technological evolution (ever evolving infrastructure and rivers of running code) brought about by many people “in a broad community of *Internauts* working together to create and evolve the technology” (Leiner, *et al.*, 2003, emphasis in the original) and, on the other hand, the addressing of multi-faceted needs coming from the academic, government, military and, later, commercial sector as well.

Books, articles, technical papers, proposals, conference presentations, all sorts of memos, and technical specifications concerning the internet are made publicly available every year. But the best example of the collective nature of the *Internaut* community since its dawn is the Request for Comment documents (RFCs), through which the ARPANET at first, and now the internet, is “sharing the information about it's [sic] own design and operation” (ibid.). Needless to say, the internet’s sharing environment is crucial not only for the network’s own design and development but also for its content. A good example of how this sharing environment has influenced the internet’s content, for instance, is the fact that, since the internet’s advent, the university research community has widely used it for the open publication of ideas and results, making full use of the new medium to promote the academic tradition of information exchange (Leiner, *et al.*, 2003).

II. B. 1 Characteristics of the Internet.

There is a history of technical innovations (like the TCP/IP) and decisions (that the TCP/IP should be available free of charge, for example), which made the internet possible and gave it certain characteristics. The ones most relevant to this thesis are the following:

- A sharing environment.
- Scale, both in infrastructure and in the number of people involved.
- Generation of interaction which impacts both the medium itself and human society at large.
- Lack of central authority or normative body.
- Capability to distribute information.

Not only academia but each and every internet user gains from the internet's sharing culture. Due to the lack of any central authority, or policy-making body in the traditional sense, which is primarily reflected in internet's open architecture design, each and every user has the ability to connect to the internet through her chosen network environment and characteristics. We owe the idea of Open Architecture Networking to Robert Kahn who, in 1972, introduced it as a solution to the problem of interconnecting networks of different technologies. In order to solve this puzzle, Kahn, together with Cerf, developed the TCP/IP protocol to replace the NCP which was limiting the communication between networks of different design.

According to Leiner *et al*, apart from practical aspects in Kahn's thinking, there was also the basic thought of a networking design which would not allow for global control

at the operational level (2003). A consequence of internet's open architecture design, of great importance to this thesis, is the fact that unlike

[p]revious 'mass media', e.g. newspapers, film or TV, [which] were designed as systems to send messages from a centre to a periphery... [we now have] a system designed from the outset to provide for the circulation of information.

(Lister, et al., 2009, p. 164)

Another factor which adds value to the 'circulation of information' through the internet is the tremendous expansion of it both in infrastructure and, most importantly, in its use by the *Internaut* community. The internet grew from 360,985,492 users in 2000 to 2,267,233,742 users in 2011 (Internet World Stats, 2011), and from a single ARPANET node at UCLA in 1969 (Leiner, *et al.*, 2003) to over 200,000,000 hosts by 2002 (Slater, 2002). The vast growing of the internet is due to the following two main reasons:

- a) [T]he free and open access to the basic documents, especially the specifications of the protocols.... [and] to the RFCs.
- b) A series of innovations and technical solutions which form the parallel history of the user friendliness of the net. A landmark of this history is the introduction of the World Wide Web (WWW) by Tim Berners-Lee in 1992 (Leiner, *et al.*, 2003).

The huge growth of the internet can be compared, in scale and rapidness, to the growth of the use of electricity during the early twentieth century. It is important to this thesis because it offers an audience to documentary, as well as to any audio-visual work, far exceeding any theatre, cinema-room, even television or radio broadcasting audience.

Considering the internet's enormous spread over almost one fourth of the population of

the earth, one can easily see that it has been one of the most influential research projects of the academic world.

The two-way interaction which we highlighted earlier, in discussing the internet's open architecture design which promoted a sharing culture within academia, extended not only to academia but to human society at large. A clear example of the way the open design of the internet influences the human society in its turn is the e-mail, which first appeared, in its international form, in 1973 at a conference of the International Network Working Group (INWG) in the University of Sussex. It was the same conference where Cerf and Khan introduced the draft communication protocol which later became the TCP/IP. Within a year, e-mail formed 75 per cent of ARPANET's traffic (Winston, 1998, pp. 329-330). According to Leiner et al., e-mail

has probably had the most significant impact of the innovations from that era. Email provided a new model of how people could communicate with each other, and changed the nature of collaboration, first in the building of the internet itself... and later for much of society (2003).

Although Winston has a strong point in suggesting "the primacy of the social sphere... [in] conditioning and determining technological developments" (1998, p. 2), following Raymond Williams' humanist approach which frames media and cultural studies against technological determinism, it is also true that

[n]ew technologies do produce highly tangible changes in the way everyday life is conducted...: they affect the way in which labour power is deployed, how money is invested and circulates, how business is done..., how and where identities are

formed... and so on. In such ways, technology, both in its forms and its capacities, profoundly affects human culture.

(Lister *et al.*, 2009, p. 319)

The internet, as ARPANET at first, was developed in order to support “a range of functions from file sharing and remote login to resource sharing and collaboration” (Leiner, *et al.*, 2003), among a few researchers and academic institutions, and evolved into a basic tool in serving the social needs of information-sharing and human communication over distance among the general population over the globe.

Yet, despite the internet’s design, which inherently resists global control, and its enormous spread, these notions are not that straightforward and unproblematic. Considering the issues of digital divide³⁵ and cultural diversity complicates things regarding the use of the internet by people internationally. As for the lack of a central regulative body, which promises a network environment freed from the powers that be and their suppression forces, further problems appear.

There have been, and still are, numerous attempts to censor internet content and suppress internet freedom by governments all over the world. *The Washington Post* gives a recent example of internet censorship in China’s attempt to have the Green Dam censoring software pre-installed on all computers sold in the vast country in 2009. China built a complex system to censor internet content at the network level since the internet first became available in the country³⁶ and with the Green Dam software tried to control the exchange of information at the level of individual computer. Luckily for the

³⁵ The concept of digital divide is used here to describe both the means and the skills needed for online participation, as in Mossberger, *et al.*, 2007, p. x.

³⁶ See the Human Rights Watch Backgrounder (2001) *Freedom of Expression and the internet in China* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/asia/china-bck-0701.htm>. (Accessed: 14 March 2010).

freedom of information, China's attempt failed, mainly because the software itself was flawed and problematic and because in market reality almost every customer had the choice to buy her PC with Green Dam pre-installed or un-installed.³⁷ However, the Chinese government still enforces the installation of Green Dam to publicly available computers at Universities and internet cafes and still "effectively controls much of the flow of information" (Editorial, 2009).

Winston gives some early examples of internet censorship and comments on government control, this time in the USA.

Operation Sun Devil was carried out in the US in May 1990...

Twenty-eight raids in two weeks seized forty-two computers and confiscated 23,000 disks. By June 1995, America On-Line was cutting off six people a day for 'net abuse'. As the system became less marginal, a regime was already being forged in legislation and the courts to suppress the radical potential of the internet as effectively as past regimes have suppressed past potentials" (1998, p. 334).

Electronic Frontiers Australia (EFA) has made public via its website a report containing "information on government policy and/or laws regarding internet censorship in various countries around the world. Information... was compiled by EFA in March 2002 in response to a request by the Chair of the NSW Standing Committee on Social Issues" (EFA, 2002). In this report, EFA offers a chronology of developments in government policies on internet censorship from 1996 to 2001 in five countries (AU, CA, NZ, UK, and USA) as well as detailed information on the same subject in sixteen countries all

³⁷ See the first of comments, by ld1123 who lives in China, in: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/16/AR2009081601697_Comments.html. (Accessed: 14 March 2010).

over the world (the former five included). According to EFA's report, internet censorship policies by the governments of those countries, by 2002, can be roughly grouped into four categories:

- a) [E]ncouragement of internet industry self-regulation and end-user voluntary use of filtering/blocking technologies.
- b) Criminal law penalties (fines or jail terms) applicable to content providers who make content 'unsuitable for minors' available online.
- c) [M]andated blocking of access to content deemed unsuitable for adults.
- d) [P]rohibition of public access to the internet.

(EFA, 2002)

A fifth category was offered by Winston as early as 1998:

- e) Several kinds of charges (charges for connection, usage, copyright).
- (p. 334).

While the former four categories are signs that established authorities tend to increase their power, instead of letting more power to the individual, justifying those critics who argue that the internet will "disproportionately increase the strength of existing concentration of power" (Smith and Kollock, 1999, p. 4), the fifth category indicates that the dream of an information superhighway, articulated in 1994 by the National Research Council report under the title *Realizing the Information Future: The internet and Beyond* (Leiner, et al., 2003), can easily turn into the nightmare of an "Information Toll Road" (Winston, 1998, p. 336).

Apart from government censorship and suppression, further problems arise from the unequal access to, and use of, the internet by the general population and the unequal representation of cultures on a global scale. According to David

Hesmondhalgh, “[t]here is massive inequality in access to the internet, not only between advanced industrial countries and ‘developing’ countries, but also within some of the ‘developed’ countries themselves” (2002, p. 215).

Hesmondhalgh goes on to present some telling statistics from Raphael Chad’s *Untangling the web* (2001).

- The average Sierra Leonean would have to pay 118 per cent of her or his earnings to pay for a month of internet access.
- [According to] US National Telecommunications and Information Administration data,... the internet-connection figures for black and Latino households in 1999-2000 were in each case about 18 per cent less than the figure for ‘all homes’, and... this gap had widened, not diminished, over the previous two years.
- In 1997, the UK Office of National Statistics showed that of the 20 per cent of households with the lowest income only 8 per cent owned home computers... But of the households in the highest 20 per cent of income, 57 per cent had a PC.
- These figures had changed little by 1999. According to Anderson et al. (1999) nearly 60 per cent of households in the highest (professional and managerial) social classes in the UK own computers, but this declines dramatically in skilled and semi-skilled households to 25 per cent and 12 per cent respectively.
(Chad cited in Hesmondhalgh, 2002, p. 215)

As Hesmondhalgh reports, internet optimists responded to these statistics by logically predicting that such figures would change and costs would come down as the technology spread, and markets grew, “encouraging even the lowest income-earners to

gain access to the technology” (2002, p. 216). But Hesmondhalgh was also right in pointing out that, as technology evolves, it becomes increasingly hungry in bandwidth (as well as in computing memory, space, and processing power) so that, even though those on lower incomes might gain access to basic networking technology, those who would benefit most from the full range of such technology would probably be the wealthier classes of society (ibid.) and the wealthier countries of the world.

Indeed, later studies confirm Hesmondhalgh’s view and indicate that inequality in the access to, and in the use of, the internet is a problematic tendency which resists in spite of time. According to a 2005 report by The Pew internet & American Life Project (a nonpartisan, non-profit, fact-tank that provides information on the impact of the internet on families, communities, work and home in the USA and the world) “[d]ifferent access speeds create a new divide among internet users. And connection speed is a more important factor in internet use than experience” (Fox, 2005, p. 4).

Furthermore:

- 57% of African-Americans go online, compared with 70% of whites.
 - 29% of those who have not graduated from high school have access, compared with 61% of high school graduates and 89% of college graduates.
 - 26% of Americans age 65 and older go online, compared with 67% of those age 50-64, 80% of those age 30-49, and 84% of those age 18-29.
- (ibid.)

A report prepared in 2005, and made public in 2006, by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has some interesting findings too.

- Regardless of how we measure it, there is an immense information and communication technology (ICT) gap, a “digital divide”, between developed and developing countries.
- A person in a high-income country is over 22 times more likely to be an internet user than someone in a low-income country.
- Secure internet servers, a rough indicator of electronic commerce, are over 100 times more common in high-income than low-income countries.
- Relative to income, the cost of internet access in a low-income country is 150 times the cost of a comparable service in a high-income country.
- There are similar divides within individual countries.
- Internet connectivity is nearly non-existent in rural areas of developing countries and, when it is available in urban areas, it is decidedly inferior to the service in developed countries.

(Press and Dumans, 2006, p. xi)

According to the United Nations Radio, the newest UNCTAD report confirms that still, in 2009, “the digital divide is expanding, with developing countries still lagging behind in using broadband connectivity” (Sambira, 2009).

Another example of inequality, this time in the representation of global cultures on the internet, is offered by Victoria Vesna, who comments on the National Initiative for a Networked Cultural Heritage (NINCH):

This organisation is comprised of sixty eight member organisations representing museums, archives, and scholarly societies, the contemporary arts, and information technology.

The goal is to create an actively-maintained, international

database with "deep data" on the projects developed by a geographically distributed team. Ironically, NINCH is led by Rice University in the US and King's College in the UK, which, together with the dominant language of the internet, unfortunately reinforces the colonial legacies rather than taking this opportune time to involve marginalised nations in the process (Vesna, nd.).

Yet, despite the internet's weaknesses, it is still an invaluable tool for the dissemination of facts, because the number of people involved in it is still great, and its backbone size and growth are still significant. Furthermore, although there is a digital divide between the wealthy and the poor internationally as well as on a national scale, global networks and the internet affect the global population, whether users or not. It is not hard for one to see how activities that frame today's human life, such as financial markets managing, distribution of goods and services or governmental and inter-governmental relations all affect the life of any individual on the planet, whether she is a network user or not (Castells, 2004, p. 22).

On April 26, 2007 Estonia was under a month-long cyber-attack allegedly by the Russians, although Russian government officials denied any involvement in the incident. The assaulters, whichever their identity may be, used an enormous amount of bots, bounded up in a giant offensive international botnet,³⁸ in order to block vital aspects of e-life and destabilize the massively computerized, and internet-dependent, Estonian society (Landler and Markoff, 2007; *CYBER GUÉRILLA Hackers, pirates et*

³⁸ A network of infected computers (bots) belonging to private individuals, companies or public bodies that can be manipulated (remote-controlled) at will by cybercriminals (*CYBER GUÉRILLA Hackers, pirates et guerres secrètes*, 2008, m.s. 20:43).

guerres secrètes, 2008). The Estonian incident indicates that the internet is of such importance to the global community that cyber-weapons, like viruses and trojans³⁹, as well as cyber-warfare techniques, like DDoS⁴⁰ attacks, are constantly being invented and that today cyber-warfare might be worth undertaking.

Moreover, as Professor John Arquilla notes, this new kind of twenty-first century warfare is one that can be fought efficiently by small groups of people, or even individuals (in *ibid.*, m. 16, 41). This is in absolute accordance with the eagerness of our postmodern world to allow the voices of small, even marginal, groups to be heard (Harvey, 2000, p. 42), and absolute universal values to be replaced by contingent local ones (Eagleton, 1997, p. 97), thus unleashing “the power of the local, of the regional and idiosyncratic” (*ibid.*, p. 28), and tremendously empowering the individual. The above principles are also reflected in the demand for an internet allowing each and every voice to reach a regional as well as an international public, regardless of how marginal or peculiar it might be (Wilhelm, 2000, p. 9).

Research on the social effects of computer-mediated communication, the internet, and information communication technologies (ICTs) in general has “pointed to a range of social costs and benefits from this new media” (Spears *et al.*, 2002, p. 92). Judgments on these costs and benefits have regarded them as “positive and negative in equal measure” (*ibid.*, p. 91). Although Marshall McLuhan and Raymond Williams both concluded most of their work before the PC market boomed, “their analysis of the

³⁹ A program that hides inside the computer and takes control of it without the knowledge of the owner of the infected machine (*CYBER GUÉRILLA Hackers, pirates et guerres secrètes*, 2008, m.s. 07:53).

⁴⁰ Abbreviation: Distributed Denial of Service. Flooding the target with thousands of connections that jam the system (*ibid.*, m.s. 05:50).

relationships between technology, culture and media continues to resonate in contemporary thought” (Lister, *et al.*, 2009, p. 77).

Beyond McLuhan’s technological determinism, and his notion of the media as “extensions of man”, able to change everything (2001, p. 57), and Williams’s humanist idea of technology as a social product, incapable of producing change on its own (2003, p. 16), there is an approach that understands technology according to its affordances.⁴¹ Drawing on cognitive psychology, technology can be studied in terms of the possibilities technological objects offer for action. In this light, although objects are invariant and independent of the observer (Gibson, 1977, p. 139), their impact on human culture can be understood through an analysis of how the public perceives them, and what people do with the objects in question, in everyday life (*ibid.*, pp. 142-143). This theoretical frame sheds light on both actual and possible uses that a technological object is capable of offering. It is relevant to this thesis because it offers a way of analyzing both contemporary practice and the potential uses of online documentary. In what follows we will examine the internet as a reliable medium for communicating documentary messages and we will highlight its significance for the stated purposes of documentary filmmaking, which we explored earlier in this thesis. Furthermore, we will explore whether internet’s potential, according to its affordances, to revolutionize human society is high or whether “its social effects... would be as profound... and as unrevolutionary” (Winston, 1998, p. 336) as the telephone network’s.

⁴¹ As used in design theory, the term “affordance”, refers to “the perceived and actual properties of (a) thing, primarily those fundamental properties that determine just how the thing could possibly be used . . . A chair affords (‘is for’) support, and, therefore, affords sitting. A chair can also be carried. Glass is for seeing through, and for breaking” (Donald Norman cited in Lister, *et al.*, 2009, p. 16).

II. C. Digital Representation and the Documentary Online.

In order to understand the documentary on the internet, the process of digitization is a very important one, for it has caused enormous changes in production structures as it increasingly does in the distribution of documentary films and material. The implications of digitization alter the way we think and talk about the relationship between cinematic and physical reality. The very process of digitization affects all major components of cultural expression by introducing new ways of doing things, or new affordances, in every medium it touches upon. As Hesmondhalgh points out, digitization had an influence on the functioning of businesses since the 1960s, while from the late 1970s onwards it “began to have a more substantial impact on the cultural industries as a whole” (2002, pp. 200-201). Digitization affects our audiovisual and communicational culture in general, bringing to fore the convergence of older media (text, sound, image graphics) through a common representational code (Manovich, 2001, p. 68) and, more importantly, new ways of organizing the public sphere.

Lev Manovich, in his seminal book: *The Language of New Media* (2001), described the difference between the old and the new media by pointing out that the new ones are digital⁴² and he proposed five main principles to distinguish them:

1. **Numerical Representation:** All new media objects can be described mathematically and can be manipulated through algorithms.
2. **Modularity:** All new media objects consist of independent parts which, in turn, consist of smaller independent parts.

⁴² Manovich avoids the word digital because he considers the term a vague one, describing three concepts in one word: a) Analogue-to-digital conversion (digitization). b) A common representational code. c) Numerical representation (2001, p. 68). When the word ‘digital’ is used in the present study, it stands for all three concepts.

3. **Automation:** As a consequence of principles 1 and 2, many operations involved in media creation, manipulation, and access, can be automated.
 4. **Variability.** Another consequence of principles 1 and 2 is the representation of data as variables rather than constants.
 5. **Transcoding.** The conversion of objects from one format to another and, most importantly, the transformation of media/culture into computer data consequently alters the media/culture.
- (2001, pp. 27-48)

A consequence of principle 3 is of great importance, to this thesis, because through automation “[t]he creative energy of the author goes into the selection and sequencing of elements rather than into original design” (ibid., p. 130). As we have seen in Chapter I, the notion of authorship in documentary has been challenged since Vertov and the introduction of the participatory film-making. As we shall see later in this thesis, the automation principle complicates further the notion of authorship in online documentary work.

The above distinguishing principles, as applied in the creation of documentary audiovisual work, are further blurring the already problematic status of the moving image. With the advent of the digital image, the representation of reality through photography becomes a representation of the representation of reality through the transformation of the analogue image into numerical data. Maxim Gorky reported on his experience of a Lumière show in his home town for the local newspaper in 1896. In that report the young poet described this early black and white film projection as “the Kingdom of shadows” (Frampton, 2006, p. 1). In this sense, the digital image may be,

like Rosencrantz's dreams, a "shadow's shadow... of so airy and light a quality"⁴³ (William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene II). By the process of digitization, moving images' indexical relationship to pro-filmic reality loses credibility and the Bazinian ontological claim on reality by virtue of the very nature of the photographic image (1967, p. 14) is seriously challenged. Old questions of pictorial representation in the art of painting, dating from Plato⁴⁴ on, become more relevant despite the obvious differences between painting and filmmaking (O'Pray, 2004, pp. 3-4).

Furthermore, the rapid advancement of information technologies infrastructures has led to increasingly cheaper, faster and more reliable computing and digital-recording ability. Together with the highly sophisticated software now available, image manipulation became way far more difficult - or even impossible - to trace, and, for the first time, available to a great number of people globally. Daniel Frampton, in his book *Filmoshophy* (2006), mentions Gorky's report and an incident when Jodie Foster's facial expression was digitally altered during the post production of the film *Contact* (Zemeckis, 1997). Frampton reaches the conclusion that "cinema... has never been, and is definitely becoming less and less, a simple and direct reproduction of reality" (2006, p. 1). The cinematograph has never been a mere reproduction of reality because it has always been two dimensional, logically arranged, and compacted and is becoming less and less a direct reproduction of reality because it increasingly lends itself to manipulation through the untraceable use of digital technology (ibid.).

⁴³ "....dreams, indeed, are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream. And I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality, that it is but a shadow's shadow" (William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene II).

⁴⁴ As mentioned in the Introduction, according to Plato's writing about representation through painting, appearance is different from, and even opposite to, truth (*Republic*, 595a-599c).

Films like *The Day After Tomorrow* (Emmerich, 2004), which extensively use Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) in order to depict a fictional reality, reveal that the digital image not only can be altered but can even be invented from scratch. Digital media do not transcribe but rather transfigure the material world, by managing mathematical abstractions rather than material traces of objects and events, and their boundaries are logical instead of physical (Binkley, 1993, pp. 100-117). New technologies have caused “the collapse of the border between the material and the immaterial, the real and the possible” (Druckrey, 1996, p. 12).

In other words, the digital image offers today a new context to Oscar Wilde’s remark about every portrait that is painted with feeling being in essence a portrait of the artist and not that of the sitter. Wilde, through the character of Basil Hallward, states that “[t]he sitter is merely the accident, the occasion. It is not he [or she] who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself [or herself]” (2006, p. 8). Accordingly, because digital image-making is able to present non-existent objects, or heavily alter real ones without leaving traces of forgery, it is rather the creator of the images who is revealed through them and not what the images themselves depict.

Susan Sontag highlights the impact of the status of the photographic image on individual memory when she argues: “To remember is, more and more, not to recall a story but to be able to call up a picture” (2004, p. 80). If Sontag is right, when the ways of recording experience change, memory changes; and when memory changes, experience and knowledge of the historical world also change. Similarly, Manovich considers digital databases “a new way to structure our experience of ourselves and of

the world” (1998) and regards them as “a new symbolic form of a computer age” (ibid.).

As modern theory is taking a distance from the belief that documentary truth lies in the image’s indexical relationship to pro-filmic reality, there is a tendency to believe that this kind of truth can be found in the fragments of the second between the projected frames of a film. That is the truth created in the spectator’s mind, where the meaning is constructed as the spectator makes instant associations leading to certain inferences. Thus, Linda Williams defines documentary “not as an essence of truth but as a set of strategies” (1993, p. 14). The new developments in digital technology, which made multi-vocal new-media documentary projects possible, allow the spectators to express their own truth by linking the elements of a database so as to build the content of the documentary they are watching. This transforms them from passive receivers of information into active participants in the interpretation and formation of meaning.

Of course, one may reasonably wonder: What good can the new communication technologies possibly do to a documentary like *The War Game* (Watkins, 1965)? Or: How could a documentary like *Iraq in Fragments* (Longley, 2006) be co-authored by its spectators? While the former is an evidence-based dramatization of a potential incident which takes tremendous efforts in the pre-production and production stages, the latter is a factual record, personal (in terms of imagery), and narrative-driven, which requires a greater effort mainly in the production and post-production stages. Imagine someone in Japan who finds some pages of three diaries written by people in Iraq interesting. While the first person publishes her favourite pages in her blog, another person, in the USA this time, is touched by the testimonies and manages to exchange a series of e-mails with the blog author in Japan. In the e-mails the idea of a documentary

project, on the basis of the chosen fragments of diaries, is born. Because these two founding members of the production team cannot afford to pay for the services of a professional scriptwriter, nor can they afford to send a team in Iraq to shoot the script and record other audiovisual material of documentary value on location, or pay a post-production expert to do the editing, they decide to do it by all means available to them at, almost, no cost.

After writing a script, in collaboration with other visitors of the blog with some experience in scriptwriting, they find solutions to overcoming the need of shooting in Iraq. They search and find footage from Iraq, freely available on the internet, and incorporate a narrator to describe by sound the visual material they lack. They edit the project, in consultation with two experienced editors who did respond to the call for help posted on the blog, and, since every piece of text and audiovisual material they used was not copyrighted, they publish it on the internet. Once online, the imaginary documentary project becomes a public space of communication, for its users can act upon it. Users are able to interact with it, as well as with other users, change its narrative line, post comments on it and on comments of others; they even are able to add evidence in textual or audiovisual form. So long as humans inhabit Japan and USA, it is probable that a number of them might be interested in such a project. How probable the above scenario might be is subject to further research among the general online community. As stated earlier, this thesis is concerned with the affordances of the new media and the internet, whether potential or realized.

There is no doubt that the above scenario would lead to a very different documentary from *Iraq in Fragments* (Longley, 2006), but it also shows that the replacement of the conventional linear-narrative documentaries, by the fragmented spaces that new media

offer, collapsed the distinction “between producers and consumers of information and culture” (Vaidhyathan, 2001, p. 153), and thus has changed how documentaries can be both produced and consumed. Online documentary, as a participative media form, is able to reach a wide audience and through its interactive elements, and the shared authorship it brings to documentary, the conventional formulation of documentary address that Nichols has described as “I [the filmmaker/author] speak about them [the world] to you [the viewer]” (2001, p. 13) now becomes: We (the viewers/co-authors) speak about us (the world) to us (the viewers/co-authors).

However, this current formulation of documentary address raises a complex issue, that of authorial voice. Found footage, of course, has one or many authors and thus is reflective of a certain point of view. But this specific point of view can be totally altered in the final narrative by whoever is able to alter the juxtaposition of the different shots and embed extra-iconic information in them. Thus, a very interesting question emerges: Who is the author of a work which is, to a great extent, in the hands of the viewer? Furthermore, what about the copyrights of the found footage and who is the owner of the copyrights of participatory, online-documentary, work? These are the issues which will be explored in the following sections of this chapter.

II. D. This Is a Copyrighted World.

As we saw earlier, in our example of the creation of a multi-vocal online-documentary, the Japanese blogger and the American who was interested in her blog would only publish their project on the internet if every piece of text and audiovisual material they used were either their own intellectual property or copyright free. According to Siva

Vaidhyathan, copyright law was created with an “original charge: to encourage creativity, science, and democracy” (2001, p. 4). But it is also true that “the property right that is copyright has become unbalanced, tilted toward an extreme. The opportunity to create and transform becomes weakened in a world in which creation requires permission and creativity must check with a lawyer” (Lessig, 2004, p. 173). Our imaginary blogger and her partner would have had a hard time finding the appropriate material needed for the realization of their online project without violating the current legal frame of copyrights, because, first of all, copyright law is extremely complicated and unpredictable (Lessig, 2010, mm. 03-05; Chapman, 2007, p. 46; Vaidhyathan, 2001, pp. 5, 7, 115).

Copyright law was introduced, in the first place, in order “to encourage the investment of time and money in works that might not otherwise find adequate reward in a completely free market” (Vaidhyathan, 2001, p. 8). But the persons mentioned earlier do not intend to profit from their online project; the market is not an issue in their minds. They are doing it out of sheer interest in their project. They are trying to make something meaningful out of their precious free time; they care about something and want to share their concern with other people. As Vaidhyathan correctly points out:

Literature, music, and art are essential elements of our public forums. They are all forms of democratic speech and should be encouraged and rewarded, not chilled with threats of legal action (2001, p. 16).

According to Vaidhyathan, the spirit governing property legislation, in England and the USA during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was informed by “a discussion of what is best for society” (2001, p. 11). A similar rationale was applied by Judge

Learned Hand in numerous decisions on copyright cases in the USA. As Vaidhyathan reports, Judge Hand argued that the law should “emanate from a concern to ensure a rich and diverse array of artistic expressions from which the public may choose” (ibid., p. 106). Hand’s reasonable view is still of great importance today for “copyright law has been a battle of strong interested parties seeking to control a market, not a concerted effort to maximize creativity and content for the benefit of the public” (ibid., p. 116). As Vaidhyathan reflects, the significance of encouraging diversity and plurality in artistic expression has been unfortunately lost (ibid.).

The potentially devastating impact of excessive copyright protection was simply ignored. Discussing the evolution of the legislative framework toward the end of the twentieth century, Vaidhyathan reports that, “[o]n several other copyright fronts, courts, Congress, and international governing institutions were steadily strengthening the power and scope of copyright protection with little or no regard for the effects these changes would have on democracy and creativity” (2001, p. 174). Indeed, as Lawrence Lessig argues,

[i]n response to a real, if not yet quantified, threat that the technologies of the Internet present to twentieth-century business models for producing and distributing culture, the law and technology are being transformed in a way that will undermine our tradition of free culture (2004, p. 173).

According to Lessig, “current copyright law excessively restrains the development of intellectual property (IP), [while, on the other hand,] economic incentives are required to stimulate the development of IP and... without copyright protection the economic incentives are diminished, resulting in the creation of less IP” (2010, mm. 01-02). One

reason for Lessig to believe that copyright law restrains the development of IP more than necessary is that, in a strict reading of the law, anyone who visits a web page with copyrighted content violates copyright law; for every time he or she pays a visit to a web page, the whole page “gets copied into RAM until [he or she] exit the browser. And JAVA plug-in modules, little programs embedded in web pages that you load into RAM to use briefly but then discard when you move on, could be the source of future lawsuits” (Vaidhyathan, 2001, pp. 161-162). As Lessig put it in fact, “in the Net every single use produces/equals a copy” (2009, m. 22).

II. E. R/W and R/O modes of Culture.

Using modern computer terminology, Lessig distinguishes two modes of human music and film culture in the so called ‘developed world’. On the one hand, the Read/Write (R/W) mode is connected to writing, speaking and creating, while on the other hand, the Read/Only (R/O) mode is characterized by reading, listening and watching. He uses the term R/W in the sense that “people participate in the creation and the recreation of their culture” (2009, m. 03), while the term R/O is used to describe the mode in which creativity of ordinary people is displaced; “creativity is consumed but the consumer is not a creator” (ibid., m. 04). In Lessig’s view, music and film culture were functioning in the R/W mode until the nineteenth century when they turned into the R/O mode by the advent of the mass media and technologies, like those of broadcasting or the vinyl technology, which concentrated and professionalized the production of culture resulting in passive consumption of audiovisual work (2009, mm. 04-05). Furthermore, Lessig argues, technology provides the new “platform through which we get access to our culture” (ibid., m. 22). But the interaction of copyright law, which was meant to

regulate copying, with the architecture of digital technologies, which render the copy not meaningful anymore, criminalizes people's creativity, driving them underground, making them prefer piracy to passive consumption (2009, mm. 47-48).

If Lessig is right, and indeed R/W was the functioning mode of creativity until the nineteenth century, then the criminalization of people for being creative can be termed *The Antigone Syndrome*. Like the young princess of Thebes, creative people today have to fight for a value of their ancestors (Sophocles, *Antigone*, 500-504, 1150-1151). Perhaps they do not regard it as a value given by the gods, nor will they be condemned to death if they fail to obey the current rule, as Antigone was, but it is still their ancestors' unwritten law that is violated and they may as well suffer or even imprisoned for not following the new rules.

But even if not all of the creative viewers were threatened by copyright law, and even if, in a miraculous way, punishment was imposed only on those whose acts truly result "in the creation of less IP" (Lessig, 2010, m. 01), by diminishing the economic incentives for producing intellectual property, current copyright law might still have a "chilling effect... on creativity, community, and democracy" (Vaidhyathan, 2001, p. 153). It is the same cry for an information superhighway instead of an "Information Toll Road" (1998, p. 336) that Winston raised. The danger is that creative production by ordinary people which, according to Lessig and McChesney, formed more than sixty percent of Web content in 2006, will not be able to flourish "if creators must seek permission from a cartel of network owners" (2006).

Perhaps, like the refrigerator, all technologies got their hum.⁴⁵ In technologies involved in the internet, the hum is caused by “the efforts of the content industries to create a ‘leak-proof’ sales and delivery system, so they can offer all their products as streams of data triple sealed by copyright, contract, and digital locks” (Vaidhyanathan, 2001, pp. 181-182). But if this is fully achieved, it will allow these companies to “control access, use, and ultimately the flow of ideas and expressions” (ibid., p. 182). It is the responsibility of our society to develop a sense of greater balance in the way we relate to the internet communication platform and to the sharing economy it affords (Lessig, 2009, mm. 41-42), for, if “constructed recklessly, copyright can once again be an instrument of censorship, just as it was [in most of Europe] before the Statute of Anne” (Vaidhyanathan, 2001, p. 184) in 1709.

II. F. Fair Use.

Of course, our hypothetical creators, one might argue, could take advantage of the *fair use*, or *fair dealing*, concepts that are built into the USA and UK copyright laws respectively, since they have no intention of charging a fee for permitting access to their creation or otherwise making a profit. But fair use is just as complicated and unpredictable as the rest of copyright law (Carroll, 2007, pp. 1087-1088).⁴⁶ According to *The Web Teaching* site, developed by the Curricular Computing division of Dartmouth's Academic Computing in the USA, “[t]he fair use doctrine has always been

⁴⁵ *How the refrigerator got its hum* is the title of an influential essay by Ruth Schwartz Cowan. In it Cowan describes how the economic interests of a few firms, involved in the production of refrigerators, have shaped the dominant electric model of refrigerators, with humming compressors, over the silent gas absorption models which were widely available since the 1920s (Cowan, 1992).

⁴⁶ See also: Office of General Counsel, University of Texas, *Fair Use of Copyrighted Materials*, [Online]. Available at: <http://www.utsystem.edu/OGC/intellectualProperty/copypol2.htm> (Accessed: 24 February 2010).

a subjective measure, balancing what is fair for the public against what is fair for the creator of a work” (Horton, 2001). The dilemma of our hypothetical creators at this point is obvious. Either they have to stop their documentary project soon after its birth or they must keep on with it and risk a confrontation with the law. In the digital era, where “the distinctions among accessing, using, and copying have collapsed” (Vaidhyathan, 2001, p. 152), our creators face criminalization, or the fear of criminalization, for contributing to the exchange of ideas, in an information-rich environment, in which the “excessive and almost perpetual copyright protection seems to be squelching beauty, impeding exposure, stifling creativity” (ibid., p. 185).

On the one hand, as Shira Perlmutter stated, “seven billion dollars in value has been lost, in the record industry, in the last six years” (in *Good Copy Bad Copy*, 2007, m. 34).⁴⁷ On the other hand, “in this day and age, the most efficient way to have artistic growth is the passing down [of] ideas... [the] recycling [of] ideas’ (Dj Girl Talk in *Good Copy Bad Copy*, 2007, m. 57), which, especially for teenagers today, is “the natural way to understand the world and create” (Lessig in *Good Copy Bad Copy*, 2007, m. 54). The concept of the culture of “Remix”, as put forth by Lessig, is key to understanding what is at stake in the situation described. “Remix is a form of creativity where people take creative work and re-interpret it by incorporating it into their own creative work.... [which they are building] on a digital platform shared internationally by people as they participate in this conversation” (2009, mm. 09-18). Anyone with access to a four hundred pounds PC “can take images from the culture around us and Remix them, and spread them, in ways that speak more powerfully than anything, anyone, could do with words” (Lessig, 2009, mm. 18-19). As Dr. Ferrara stated, what is on the line here is creativity itself. The stake is “striking a balance between

⁴⁷ Shira Perlmutter is the Head of Global Legal Policy of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI).

protecting the rights of those who own intellectual property... [and] the rights of generations of future young and old people to create” (Director of Music Department at New York University, in *Good Copy Bad Copy*, 2007, m. 55).

In order to update the copyright law, to synchronize it with digital technologies, Lessig proposes two basic distinctions that the law needs to take into account: Between copies and Remix and between commercial and non-commercial creative work.⁴⁸ The following chart depicts Lessig’s view on how the law should apply copyright protection to creative works:

	<i>Copies</i>	<i>Remix</i>
<i>Commercial</i>	©	© / Free
<i>Non-commercial</i>	© / Free	Free

(2009, m. 36)

So, according to Lessig, Remixing for non-commercial purposes should be absolutely free and making complete copies for commercial purposes should be strictly protected. Furthermore, complete copies for non-commercial reasons, as well as Remixing for commercial purposes, should be partly protected and partly freed.

This way the law would take into account the new features of the digital networks and it would focus on the context of use (on how one is using the creative work that one is copying), instead of focusing on piracy and the copy itself which is no longer meaningful (2009, m.s. 03:35). Lessig urges us to have less control, “to be more open to this culture that there is no practical way to control” (2009, m. 42). The chairman

⁴⁸ In fact Lessig distinguishes between copies and Remix and between professional and amateur. The terms ‘commercial’ and ‘non-commercial’ are chosen in this thesis, instead of professional and amateur, in order for pejorative connotations - deriving from the concept of the amateur as sloppy or not good enough to be professional - to be avoided.

and CEO of the Motion Pictures Association of America, Mr. Glickman, paradoxically agrees with the latter part of Lessig's statement when expressing his opinion that piracy will never stop (in *Good Copy Bad Copy*, 2007, m. 16).⁴⁹ Lessig goes just one step beyond when warning: Do not let creative people live their lives constantly against the law, for "this is, extraordinarily corrosive, extraordinarily corruptive of the rule of law in a democracy" (2009, mm. 47-48). Stop a war that cannot be won (ibid.).

Fortunately our hypothetical creators live their lives only in the imagination of their imaginer, and they are not part of the historical world. Their situation is purely fictional, so it is up to the author to shape it as he wishes. For the needs of this thesis, we will assume that our creators were lucky enough to find a sponsor to pay for their entire project. They found a wealthy person, born in Iraq, raised and prospering as a Swedish citizen, with a passionate interest in their subject. Or should we say that she found them, for she was the first to contact them through their blog? After some writing between them, she offered her expertise (as a lawyer), and the total amount needed for clearing the copyrights of every piece of material they were going to use. Thus, our creative explorers are now ready to launch their project without the fear of being prosecuted. Although a huge amount of money was spent by the sponsor for purchasing the copyrights, the team decided to start a discourse rather than a commercial transaction, so they licensed their website under the Creative Commons license by Attribution Share Alike. That means that they allow others to copy, distribute, display and perform all material and any creative work made for this project so far as they give credit to the creators of the works they use, and license their own creations under the

⁴⁹ The following statement is interesting and rather revealing of Mr. Glickman's relation to the sharing culture described here: "Clearly people will not do things for free. It defies human nature to paint a picture or do a statue and just give it away. There might be a few people like that, but they probably don't eat very well" (in *Good Copy Bad Copy*, 2007, m. 53).

very same terms.⁵⁰ Thus they ensure that they, and all the viewers-contributors of their project, will be rewarded by attribution; and that any derivatives of the creative work made for their project will enrich the conversation. But attribute exactly what to whom? How is authorship defined in this project of mixing and Remixing, images, sounds, written texts, ideas from cultures around the globe? We will try to explore the answers to these questions in the final section of this chapter.

II. G. The Author in the Blender.

Since our hypothetical creators licensed their project under the Creative Commons license by Attribution Share Alike, all contributors to their project agree to publish the content they add to the project in accordance with the terms and conditions of this licence. The same applies to all those interested in making derivative creative works as well. By allowing their work to be used freely by anyone, for any purpose, so long as she acknowledges her source and agrees to publish her creation under the very same terms, our creators have dealt with authorship issues in the context of the copyright law.

But broader issues of authorship in the cinematic work have been subject of debate well before the advent of the digital moving image. These issues, besides their theoretical interest, are relevant in the digital era for a practical reason as well. In an age where multi-vocal, participatory, cinematic works are possible, because of the new affordances introduced by the digital media, it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish the author of a cinematic text which may have hundreds or even thousands

⁵⁰ See: Creative Commons Website, *About Licenses*, [Online]. Available at: <http://creativecommons.org/about/licenses/> (Accessed: 22 February 2010).

of layers of content input from, perhaps, an equal number of contributors. But if the author of a cinematic work is not recognisable how can she be acknowledged by those wishing to make derivatives of her creative work?

The notion of the author comes mainly from literature and thus it is mostly associated with written works. According to Michel Foucault, “[t]he author's name serves to characterize a certain mode of being of discourse...., it is a speech that must be received in a certain mode and that, in a given culture, must receive a certain status” (1984, p. 107). Foucault also connects the advent of the idea of the author with the need for assigning responsibility -for texts and discourses which violate the law, or moral principles- to specific individuals, thus making possible the punishment of the offenders (ibid., p. 106).

Both Foucault (1984, p. 105) and Roland Barthes (1977, p. 143) agree that the French symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé was the first to declare the disappearance of the author in favour of language itself. According to Barthes, surrealists, in the 1920s contributed to the death of the author by the surrealist “jolt,”⁵¹ by automatic writing and, most importantly to this thesis, “by accepting the principle and the experience of several people writing together” (1977, p. 144). For Barthes, as for Mallarmé, “it is language which speaks, not the author” (ibid., p. 143) and “[t]he text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture” (Barthes, 1977, p. 146), not an original work made by a more or less ingenious individual.

Although Foucault considers the author-function useful as “characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within a society” (1984, p.

⁵¹ “[T]he abrupt disappointment of expectations of meaning” (Barthes, 1977, p. 144).

108), he declares the author an “ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning” (ibid., p. 119). He even goes further to predict that, “as our society changes, at the very moment when it is in the process of changing, the author function will disappear” (ibid.). In an era when the empowered reader is not only responsible for the creation of meaning in the texts she reads, but also for the propagation of her interpretation of these texts through digital platforms of communication, like the internet, it is time for the author to pass away. The time for the reader to rise from the dead author’s body (Barthes, 1977, p. 148).

In the context of traditional film, as mentioned earlier, attributing authorship has always been a controversial issue for film theorists as well as for the law. In this context, Rudolph Arnheim, notes the divisive nature of this problem and offers his view on the subject in a 1934 essay entitled *Who Is the Author of a Film?*⁵² According to Arnheim, although most films are practically the result of creative efforts made by many people who function differently and offer multiple perspectives to the work, the author of a cinematic work is the one who puts his signature on the finished film. That is the person without the contribution of whom the cinematic work would not have been the same (Arnheim, 1997, pp. 62-69). This is in accordance with the auteur theory as advocated by François Truffaut as well as other practitioners and film critics of the French New Wave who offered their views through the notorious magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma*, in the 1950s.

Today, when the audiences have become viewers participating in a culture of Remix, attributing authorship of a new media cinematic work to a certain person or group is far more difficult. Copyright statutes, according to Mary LaFrance, “contain several rules

⁵² The specific essay was translated from German by Foucault himself.

for distinguishing among different categories of works that involve the coalescence of creative contributions from multiple authors. These categories include derivative works, collective works, and joint works” (LaFrance, 2007, p. 55). Derivative works are adaptations of existing creative works while collective works are compilations of existing creative works as well. In both these cases the authorship of the resulting work depends on the level of creativity present in the adaptation of the original works, and the efficiency of the transformation of the underlying works. Joint works, however, although they may have one or many authors according to their lawful relative ownership interests, once created as joint works will always remain joint works (ibid, pp. 55-58).

Current, internet-based, interactive, participatory creative works could fall within all of the above categories depending on the basic functioning choices regarding the interface of the work as put forth by its *initiators*. Furthermore, such projects -because of their interactive, participatory nature- are in constant flux and they can be revised and altered indefinitely as long as they remain online. They never reach a final conclusion and the list of authors, of such works, can change from hour to hour, even within minutes or seconds. But, according to the present copyright law in the USA, “[a] work is eligible for copyright protection *only* if it is fixed by or on behalf of its author” (LaFrance, 2007, p. 68, note 26, emphasis added). Therefore, attributing the underlying works of a derivative creative work, is not possible unless the design of the interface and its functioning choices are created, or evolve at a later stage, to provide one or many specific authors, of parts of it or of the whole, who are able to conclude their creative efforts and present a final work. Because of their digital nature, new media offer relatively cheap platforms for connection and exchange, enabling every-day people to

mix and Remix elements of the global culture, thus freeing the creativity of ordinary people.

Arnheim's remarks, from an era when cinema was still in a state of infancy, in search of its means for creative expression, are still surprisingly relevant. Although today, perhaps more than in the 1930s, "the value of teamwork derives precisely from the difference of perspective that comes with the difference of function, as well as from the variety of personal temperaments and outlooks" (Arnheim, 1997, p. 67), still creative contribution alone "does not suffice to establish authorship of the movie" (LaFrance, 2007, p. 62). Therefore, in the moving image context, within our current culture of Remix, authorship should be assigned to the person who, through editing, determines "the precise rhythm of the sequence and the harmonious coordination of ... values and movements" (Arnheim, 1997, p. 65), thus creating the meaning and the feeling of the work. Authorship, even in a joint cinematic work, should be contributed to whoever "'superintends' or 'masterminds' the production – that is, 'someone at the top of the screen credits,... someone who has artistic control'" (LaFrance, 2007, p. 62), be it a specific person or a certain group of people.

II. H. A Short Epilogue to Chapter II.

In this chapter we analyzed the internet's potential usefulness for documentary image-making, because of the network's growth and spread all over the planet, as well as its impact on the society which created it and still maintains it. The remarkable spread of the internet provides a huge potential audience to the creators of documentaries and explains the increase of documentary's influential power. We have seen how the current

conditions of production and consumption that digitization imposes on the documentary idiom have changed it tremendously. But, as we have seen, the documentary form is still closely connected to actuality in the view of film theorists as well as film practitioners and audiences. We also noted the importance of the internet as a new platform for producing and distributing documentary work in innovative ways and the problems that arise from it. As we discovered, censorship, lack of cultural diversity, and the digital divide -as regards both the means and the skills needed for online participation- are threatening the democratic and emancipatory potential of the new medium. Potential, as we saw in Chapter I, put forth by Vertov in the early 1920s.

We followed two hypothetical initiators of online documentary work in their efforts to create an online imaginary documentary project out of mere interest and we saw the problems they faced during their journey. The obstacle of copyright protection of others' creative work as well as the issue of the authorship of their joint creative work were discussed and partly resolved. So long as our initiators were only imaginary we gave their fate a twist towards a desired direction and allowed them to participate in the rising culture of Remix and in the fascinatingly fluid discussion that sparks the creativity of ordinary people. In the next Chapter of this thesis we examine how the tactics, put forth by the movements discussed in Chapter I, as leading to truthfulness, merge with the rising culture of Remix and its characteristics in three contemporary audiovisual documentary works adding to their value as evidence.

CHAPTER III

III. A. A Short Prologue to Chapter III.

In this thesis, we have seen so far that, although truth cannot be mechanically assured by any set of specific rules and prohibitions, film-makers have always strived to achieve a higher evidential status in their work by the use of certain strategies. In Chapter I, we saw the basic tactics adopted by the documentary movements under scrutiny for attaining a truthful representation of reality. In Chapter II, we noted the ability of the digital image and sound to further elevate documentary film's evidential status in a networked environment and issues regarding the use of, and access to, technology, issues regarding the authorship of the works produced in the sharing culture's audiovisual regime, and the copyright status of such documentary works in relation to the new exciting culture of Remix.

This Chapter examines three contemporary audiovisual documentary works describing factual incidents in regard to their origin and their purpose in order to identify the formal elements and the narrative strategies they employ in relation to their claims on veracity and truthfulness. According to Jacques Rancière "images are the object of a twofold question: the question of their origin (and consequently their truth content) and the question of their end or purpose, the uses they are put to and the effects they result in" (2004, p. 20).

The following case studies are treated as statements made by their authors through the deliberate and conscious act of creating cinematic work. The authors of the following

films presumably had free choice to determine what to include in, or exclude from, their work. The contents of the films are also examined in search of characteristics which facilitate or undermine the comprehension of their subject, thus affecting their value as evidence. Finally, in the course of examining the above films, certain observations are made in regard to the divergence between their perspective and that of the official news media and certain ethical questions are raised in regard to the use of the internet both as compilation platform and distribution channel.

All case studies share the same subject with the practical elements of the thesis, and they provide valuable historical context to, as well as points of reference for evaluating the formal strategies used in, the produced short films (PaR). The common subject of the films involves massive civilian movements and all three, as mentioned in the Introduction, facilitate the qualitative research method by “describing, understanding, and explaining” (Tellis, 1997) in a replication logic which allows comparisons of their individual elements.

1. *This is What Democracy Looks Like* (Friedberg and Rowley, 2000).

An account of street protests in opposition to the 1999 WTO meeting in Seattle using footage shot by protesters themselves with over 100 amateur cameras.
2. *Into the Fire* (Dicks, 2011).

A documentary description of the demonstrations that took place during the G20 summit in downtown Toronto in 2011.
3. *Bahrain: Shouting in the Dark* (Welsh, 2011).

A documentary record of the ‘silent’ revolution in Bahrain, currently under military law.

III. B. *This is what Democracy Looks Like* (Friedberg and Rowley, 2000).

Despite the fact that Friedberg’s and Rowley’s film was shot by over one hundred media activists, they did not share the hardships that the initiators of the online documentary project described in Chapter II had encountered regarding the authorship status of their work. While the legal ownership of the film was assured by its producers, who acquired permission to use all of the used footage as they declare on their website,⁵³ the authorship of the final film undeniably belongs to its aforementioned directors/editors. Although they have taken advantage of the points of view of such a great number of activists, Friedberg and Rowley have treated the raw material of actuality as parts of their arguments, which are presented in a highly formalist manner. The film’s main narrative line evolves around the protests organized to prevent the Seattle meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) that had been scheduled to take place in November 1999. Perceiving the role of the WTO as unjust, clearly supportive of multinational corporate greed at the expense of working people, over fifty⁵⁴ thousand people came together to protest in downtown Seattle. The directors/editors of the film elucidate in detail the rationale for the demonstrations. They use the above incident as an opportunity to articulate their arguments about the current globalization politics of Western countries and the struggle of civilian movements to take back their abolished democratic rights from the political and corporate elites.

⁵³ Available at: <http://www.corrugate.org/footage-requests.html> (Accessed: 23 April 2012).

⁵⁴ According to a protester interviewed in the film (m.s. 47:05); also in m.s. 13:55.

Like Vertov, Friedberg and Rowley were willing to use any technique, any editing strategy available in order to deliver their global activist decoding of the world through their work. In their avant-garde creation, among other cinematic techniques, they use voice-over narration, frame within frame effects, split screens, and superimpositions. But the most dominant formal elements in their film are the interviews, the on-screen text, and the use of music throughout the film, in harmony with the protesters' drums and beat, thus highlighting their fighting mood. The resulting film is highly hybridized, indebted to Vertov and the documentary tradition as well as the current culture of Remix described in Chapter II. The authors of the film have incorporated shots taken from several sources without altering their proportions, and allowed their different frame ratios, and different image qualities, to reveal the seams between different contributions and expose the relationship of the film to the exciting culture of Remix. Lessig coined the term Remix and defined it as a creative form where people express their views by combining and re-interpreting works of others "into their own creative work" (2009). The above basic definition describes also the method of the compilation films created by Vertov and other film-makers in the infant Soviet Union before the establishment of the compilation type of documentary by Shub. Furthermore, the manner of people who build their creative work "on a digital platform shared internationally by people as they participate in this conversation" (ibid.) conforms to Vertov's conception of the Kino-Eyes (Kinoki), a net of non-professional film-makers acting as correspondents as well as distributors of their participatory films. As we saw in Chapter I, Vertov drew the concept of the Kino-Eyes (kinoki) from the example of the Bolshevik newspaper.

Although Friedberg's and Rowley's documentary incorporates elements of all the documentary movements mentioned in Chapter I, it does not obey their full set of strategies; therefore it does not adopt the stance of any of them in particular. Like Vertov in his masterpiece, *The Man with the Movie Camera* (Vertov, 1929), Friedberg and Rowley employ a parade of visually strong formal experimentations, and deploy great argumentative force, in the film under scrutiny. On the other hand, as mentioned in Chapter I, although Vertov himself used on-screen text sporadically in his films, he denounced the extensive use of this vehicle, in all its forms, as an undesired bond between the newly born art of cinema and the classic art of literature which he held in contempt. Friedberg and Rowley, however, use this vehicle heavily throughout their film in order to provide information on both the presented images and the historical context these images are part of, thus elevating the film's evidential status.

The voice-over narration by Susan Sarandon and Michael Franti⁵⁵ is the voice of the authors of the film delivering important extra-iconic information and the views of the authors on the portrayed incidents. The tone of the voice-over narration is neutral; it sometimes sounds almost like the lyrics of a rap song and does not reveal any information about the sympathies of the film's authors. As an element of form, together with the interviews which deliver the participators' views on the portrayed incidents as well as important information about the *raison d'être* of the protesters, it meets the needs of the British Documentary movement for informing and educating the audience as we have seen in Chapter I. On the other hand, considering Grierson's critique of Vertov's *The Man with the Movie Camera* (1929), noted in Chapter I, we could safely deduce that the British Documentary movement would not agree with the avant-garde aesthetics of *This is what Democracy Looks Like* (Friedberg and Rowley, 2000), and

⁵⁵ Franti is the leader of the music group Spearhead.

Grierson would have also accused it of exhibitionism, or of virtuosic craftsmanship, which does not qualify its authors as creators (Grierson, 1966, p. 127), as he did with Vertov's film.

Furthermore, while all footage has been shot in *Vérité* style, the resulting film incorporates formal elements that neither Direct Cinema nor *Cinéma Vérité* would agree upon. Although, as mentioned in Chapter I, the *Vérité* movements are idiosyncratic, not adopting any particular set of tenets as general rules, none of these movements would be able to tolerate the film in its entirety. A pure *Vérité* approach, as noted in Chapter I, would oppose the use of supplementary music, extensive voice-over commentary and the formal experimentations in the film. Direct Cinema, of course, as we have seen in Chapter I, also eschews the use of interviews. Yet, this is a film that reminds us of Hitchcock's comment on Grierson's work; "shape, form, colour, molten into pattern and design" (Hitchcock on Grierson, 1965, m.s. 38:30) deliver the view of the film's authors and reveal their "painter's eye" (ibid., m.s. 07:40).

The role of the mainstream news media on the occasion is described clearly in the film. The audience is witnessing mass media propaganda at its peak. In harmonious cooperation with the authorities, the media present the demonstrators as an unruly, violent mob, a menace to the city of Seattle. As a woman testified in front of the lens, she had been on the streets protesting all day and when she went back to her apartment and watched the news what she saw on the TV simply "was not what really happened" (m.s. 23:18). The DVD edition of the film includes an autonomous recorded interview with Noam Chomsky. In it Chomsky offers a very simple, powerful, and enlightening account of facts regarding the WTO's means and purposes, but he does not provide enough commentary on news media and their response to state threatening situations. In

the documentary film *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media* (Achbar and Wintonick, 1992), he analyzes such issues in much greater length. According to Chomsky's line of thought, the woman mentioned above did not see what she knew had happened on TV because big news media set the agenda for the local ones (m. 36) and all mainstream media serve the ruling elites in order "to control what people think" (m.s. 25:55) and to marginalize human rights "in favour of the rights of private tyrannies" (h.m.s. 01:19:55).⁵⁶

In the above mentioned film, Chomsky agrees with Grierson's view of the fascist nature of the ideas of Lipmann, noted in Chapter I, who, according to the former, "had the opposite of the standard view about democracy" (m.s. 23:40). Despite Lipmann's distrust of public views, in *This is what Democracy Looks Like* (Friedberg and Rowley, 2000) over a hundred members of the public shot footage, and offered their view as the only alternative to mainstream propaganda. Needless to say, it would be expected that their own camera lenses would document the experience of the woman in m.s. 23:18 rather than the view dictated by the mainstream news media which she watched on TV that night. Because, as another witness put it on camera in m.s. 39:55, "there wasn't a riot, by any means of the word, but it was a manifestation of the people's voice and the [violent] response by the police department was one of the most significant turning points". While the elite media were describing a case of alleged chaos and disorder caused by the protesters, various police forces were poisoning thousands of peaceful protesters with chemicals in massive quantities and acting in a totally brutal, authoritative, manner.

⁵⁶ Hour: Minute: Second.

Friedberg and Rowley did not fail to document incidents of property damage, like the one caused by a group of protesters to a Nike store, and they provide a rationale to those protesters by the articulation of information on the greed of the Nike corporation and the suffering it causes to the workers it exploits in China (m.s. 19:45).⁵⁷ The inclusion of these rare violent acts committed by protesters is the only point where the editors' totally committed stance seems to aspire to fairness and impartiality -an element which, as we saw in Chapter I, was handed down to Direct Cinema by the USA journalist tradition of the early twentieth century. Furthermore, the fact that nowhere in the film do the directors/editors of the film try to conceal, or downplay, their highly committed point-of-view, that has been omitted from the mainstream media accounts, is a self-reflexive element indicating their political desire to portray things as they really are, the ambition of documentary realism.

The edited filmic material does not show any signs of image manipulation nor could its creators possibly have staged the recorded events, certainly not in secrecy. Their convictions are backed up by Chomsky, as we have seen, as well as by Lessig's statement that: "[o]ur government is fundamentally irrational for a fundamentally rational reason: policy follows not sense, but dollars" (2008, p. 294). Lessig goes on to state that "our government is irrational because it is, in an important way, corrupt. And until that corruption is solved, we should expect little good from this government" (ibid.). The pepper-sprays, tear-gasses, batons, the great barbarism we witnessed, are all for real and it is highly probable that not only were free speech and the freedom of assembly at stake during the recorded events, but, during that moment in history, the USA authorities declared "war on their people" (m. 42) as well. Of course, this is not

⁵⁷ For a deeper exploration of the Anarchists' views as well as telling shots of police brutality see *Breaking the Spell* (Lewis, Ream, Rock, 1999). Available at: <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=9073827608399871128#> (Accessed: 02 April 2012).

new since Brecht as early as in the 1930s has noted that people's "oppressors and exploiters have stepped out and joined a bloody battle with them of vast dimensions" (1980, p. 80). Furthermore, if the above are true, this war might still be going on, so the film urges people to keep on fighting "to take back democracy" (m.s. 34:30).

III. C. *Into the Fire* (Dicks, 2011).

This film about the G20 summit in Toronto, in 2010, employs many of the formal characteristics of the previous case study, although it deploys them in a less sophisticated and less experimental manner. As it is evident from its end titles, the film has been shot by a total of nine cameras and incorporated footage from forty six other sources. Contrary to the first case study, Dicks, except for a few shots, incorporates the found footage he uses coherently, without allowing shots with different frame ratios to appear in the film. During the post-production stage he smoothed the joins between different contributions which are revealed as such through their different image and sound quality, therefore, through their different 'feel,' as well as with on-screen text stating their sources. Nevertheless, the above film is another example of the current culture of Remix in its basic sense, that of compilation documentary. Dicks, like Friedberg and Rowley in the previous case study, took advantage of fragmented audiovisual material uploaded on the internet by ordinary people in order to capture the reality they had encountered on the spot. Two formal elements dominate Dicks' film, the supplementary music which highlights the mood of many sequences, and the heavy use of interviews in order to explain and advance the story of the film. Although, as mentioned in the Short Prologue, the director has sole responsibility for what has been included in his film, and he may have excluded opposite voices during the editing of the

film, the immediacy of the footage shot in Vérité style, as well as the number of the convincingly presented views serves the films' quest for truthfulness.

Before we proceed to analyze its content, it is worth noting two elements of its form. As the director/producer of the film presents himself in front of the camera as well as several contributing on-field cinematographers, who even interfere with the film's subjects, acting as *provocateurs*, he adopts a self-referential formal element. As we have seen in Chapter I, the film-makers' interference with, or provocation of, the subjects they document is in accordance with Cinéma Vérité's approach. Although Dicks' film is the most self-reflexive of the case studies, Dicks fails to use this vehicle in his film in a manner that could shed more light on his arguments. Unlike Rouch's self-reflexive participatory anthropology, Dicks uses self-reference in his film without providing any significant information regarding his subjects' causes, feelings, or inner mental state. Furthermore, Dicks does not reveal much about the process of his filming through an open self-reflexive stance, as Vertov did in *The Man with the Movie Camera* (1929) for example (Hicks, 2007, p. 46, 96). The same applies to another element heavily employed in Dicks' film, the interview. Although the film provides both short (reportage-style) and longer interviews, it fails to provide any important extra-iconic information on the subject, nor does it produce any significant emotional experience by the use of this formal element.

Dicks uses the many interviews in his film in order to advance the story, interpret, comment on, or highlight aspects of the moving images he presents. In many cases we hear the sound of the interviews as voice-over on several images interpreting them for the audience and advancing Dicks' arguments. Although the voice of the interviewee is a usually interesting alternative to the Griersonian *voice of God* voice-over narration, as

Dicks' film reveals, it might be equally authoritative. Contrary to the Soviets and Vertov, Dicks advances his arguments through sound rather than his imagery, imposing his view of the situation. In addition, the music of the film, and at least one sound effect,⁵⁸ create certain feelings to the audience. One could reasonably argue that the priority of sound over the images in the construction of meaning in Dicks' film makes his film lengthy. As we have seen, Friedberg and Rowley, in the previous case study, use their interviews more powerfully, in order to shed light on their subjects' causes and explain what united them in the portrayed demonstrations. As we shall see in the next case study, the interviews of wounded, hopeless, Bahrainis and doctors, describing their desperate situation, produce great emotional engagement.

Despite the above, *Into the Fire* (Dicks, 2011) provides a valuable description of the portrayed events as well as conveys, to an extent, *the feeling of being there* through its Vérité style footage. This film takes its audience for a ride to “the new world order amusement park” (h.m.s. 01:13:20). The amusement in this very special “park” lies in police brutality, deceit, and intimidation of the public, and the film's most valuable virtue lies in its humour. Charlie Veitch,⁵⁹ one of the contributing cinematographers, is the love police detective whose “job is to lower fear and raise love” (m.s. 14:10), provides the richest source of humour in the film, and his Michael-Mooreian appearance offers the spectator a possible reason to keep watching an arguably lengthy film as well as to engage more with it emotionally. Chomsky's notion of the ruling elites, mentioned in the previous case study, is described in this film as “the new world order” or a “global corporate Fascist takeover” (m. 48), as a young interviewee put it. Dicks' film

⁵⁸ Dicks, all through the film, uses the supplementary sound of marching boots over many shots of marching riot police.

⁵⁹ Veitch's website is available at: www.cveitch.org (Accessed: 08 May 2012).

provides audiovisual evidence that, as Kim Derry⁶⁰ told the media before the summit, the G20 offered the Toronto police an opportunity to test its ability “to work in concert with private and public sector” (m.s. 02:28). The opportunity for testing this harmonic cooperation resulted in a cost of a billion USA dollars⁶¹ of tax-payers’ money and led to a massive abolishment of democratic rights in downtown Toronto.

As the leading politicians of the G20 arrived from around the globe, approximately 20.000 police officers and private security staff⁶² were on duty to keep the peace and to provide safety during the event. Activists arrived also from all over the world and, together with the people of Canada and Toronto, took to the streets in massive protests against the G20 and its agenda. Police officers who were supposed ‘to serve and protect’ became a tool for controlling and suppressing the public. The authorities employed obsolete wartime legislation, originally enacted in 1939, which was no longer in force, in order to criminalize dissent.

As the film convincingly argues, the authorities also placed, *agent provocateurs*, groups of “fake protesters to cause trouble” (m. 13). While *provocateurs*, like those hiding behind the police lines in m. 47, as well as some young enthusiasts of the anarchist black bloc, damaged property and incited violence in downtown Toronto, the city’s police and its safety mechanism stood down, not engaging at all with the trouble makers, who, arguably, were even facilitated by the authorities (mm. 36-42). Images of vandalism, recorded and repeatedly shown by the mainstream news media, demonized

⁶⁰ Derry is the Deputy Chief of Toronto Police Service and he made this statement in a press conference before the summit.

⁶¹ This is the total amount spent on security for the G20 summit as well as the thirty sixth G8 meeting in Ontario which was held earlier this year (Contenta, 2010).

⁶² According to The Boston Globe, 28 June 2010 [Online]. Available at: http://www.boston.com/bigpicture/2010/06/g20_protests_in_toronto.html (Accessed: 6 May 2012).

protesters and offered the pre-text to the authorities to further undermine the law, and temporally enforce police state in downtown Toronto. A similar situation is presented in a very interesting documentary entitled, *You, Me and the SPP: Trading Democracy for Corporate Rule* (Manly, 2009). In this case, it is undercover police officers themselves who appear to instigate violence among the demonstrators in the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) summit of Montebello, Quebec, Canada in 2007. Indeed, on that occasion, the authorities finally confirmed the identity of the *provocateurs*.

Another compilation documentary on the G20 summit, *Under Occupation: Toronto G20 Operation* (LibertyDefender84, 2010), describes extensively the peaceful nature of the protests in Toronto as well as the independent media's highlighting of it. Similarly, in *Into the Fire* (2011), Dicks recorded members of a peaceful assembly who were literally trapped by riot police in front of the Novatel hotel and kept there for hours, all wet under the pouring sky, until protesters were arrested one by one for their failure to disperse, even though there was nowhere to go. According to Dicks, 1.105 citizens were arrested during the G20 summit and many of them were incarcerated for several hours without any evidence to support their engagement in unlawful behaviour. Veitch, for example, was incarcerated for two out of the six days he visited Toronto (h.m.s. 01:43:23). Furthermore, Valerie Zawilski⁶³ explains the humiliating, unhealthy, and, in some cases, even torturous conditions under which generally innocent people were detained (h.m. 01:34).

Dicks, in a veracious manner, openly reveals his convictions on the subject described in the film and he also claims that the convictions he holds have *affinity with fact*.

⁶³ Zawilski is a professor at the University of Western Ontario.

Although *Into the Fire* (Dicks, 2011) does not provide adequate information on the historical context of its narrative, thus decreasing its value as evidence, it does provide an accurate audiovisual record of an important actual incident. The harassments of peaceful protesters that the audience witnesses in the film, the deceit of the public, the undermining of the rule of law by the very authorities assigned to protect it, the miserable detention conditions which were imposed upon mostly innocent people, the random searches and arrests of people peacefully assembled, all the above actually happened in Toronto in 2010. Military law had been imposed during those days in Toronto and Dicks' film warns democratic people all over the world about the terrible consequences of the fascist behaviour adopted by modern democratic states.

III. D. *Bahrain: Shouting In the Dark* (Welsh, 2011).

Although a lot of TV networks from around the globe have covered the revolution in Egypt extensively, and laid to public scrutiny the result of the Tunisian revolution as well as the civil war in Libya, they have paid little attention to other revolutions in their infancy like those in Yemen, or Bahrain (Oates, 2011). Al Jazeera English reporter May Ying Welsh produced the only documentary evidence of the Bahraini's massive peaceful protests in demand of political reform and constitutional monarchy, which broke out in February 2011. After the brutal crackdown of the Bahraini regime on the protesters, they demanded the abdication of their king and the ending of the royal family's rule which dated back to the 19th century. The Manama government's reaction to the protesters' legitimate demand was to reinforce its police with special Pakistani forces and its army with Saudi Arabian troops in order to crackdown on them even more brutally by intimidation, unlawful incarcerations, even killing in cold blood. Bahrainis

still fight the Saudi-backed regime on the streets, despite the fact that a great number of them have been injured and killed, and they are determined to continue until their just demands are met.

Welsh portrayed the struggle for freedom of the people in Bahrain over the course of three months. Within that period, Welsh, who acted as cinematographer, sound recordist, and reporter, shot much of her exterior footage undercover (Welsh, 2012). Like both previous case studies, the edited footage takes a hybrid form which, as we saw in Chapter II, is very common in current documentary production in general. Three formal elements dominate Welsh's documentary, the interview, the heavy voice-over commentary, and the use of the Salmaniya hospital footage as a *leit-motif* to connect the story.

Before we proceed to examine those formal elements, however, it is worth noting a crucial aspect of the dangers surrounding the use of the internet and the social networks during civil upheavals. As we have seen in Chapter II, the internet is a potentially useful vehicle for the communication of the people. It has been used by many in such an uneasy world to provide information as well as inspiration to current civilian movements. However, a violent and revengeful regime will probably use people's electronic traces in order to identify its opponents and crush resistance as the Al Khalifa family did in Bahrain in extreme violence, according to Welsh's documentary report (2011, mm. 39-41). Furthermore, the fact that the authorities were using Bahraini's photographs uploaded on networking sites to search and punish protesters indicates an endangering effect documentary images can also have on the documented persons.

Welsh protected part of her interviewees from the danger of being recognized by the authorities through concealing them behind a shadow lighting effect and by using dramatic lighting when their characteristics were revealed. These formal elements, in fact, characterise her own approach to the familiar Grierson-type talking-head interview. On the other hand, although no person involved in criminal activity has been recorded in a recognizable manner in Welsh's report, she failed to conceal the identities of the people participating in the recorded demonstrations. Perhaps none of them had acted illegally, but as an experienced reporter Welsh should have paid more attention to the possible consequences of her image-taking on the safety of her subjects under an authoritative regime. The above raises questions of ethics, regarding exploitation and mistreatment of the people filmed (Winston, 1995, p. 21). Questions like those are raised by all movements under investigation in Chapter I and, as Winston put it, still haunt the realist documentary to this day (ibid., p. 96). Regardless of the above moral issue, unlike the use of the interviews in the second case study (Dicks' film), Welsh did not use this vehicle to advance the story of her film but she bases her narration more on the almost constant voice-over commentary and the images themselves. Most interviews in Welsh's film aid the audience's understanding of the depicted events without straightforwardly explaining them as in Dicks' film, and they are also emotionally engaging, especially those recorded in the hospital.

Although Welsh did not aspire to formal experimentations in her documentary, it is worth noting the use of editing in m.s. 46:15, as illustrated in the juxtaposition of two specific shots. Welsh presents Barak Obama making a bold statement to the media about USA's alliance with revolutionary democrats all over the world, followed by a static shot of the *silent* USA embassy in Bahrain (2011). At that point the use of editing echoes the Soviet montage school and its early linguistic approach, mentioned in

Chapter I, the idea that the juxtaposition of two images produces new meaning that goes beyond both in the spectators' mind (Thompson and Bordwell, 2003, p. 130). Of course, all case studies use the manipulative power of montage in order to advance their arguments but Welsh, at that point, uses it more vigorously. According to Eisenstein, shots with conflicting meanings are able to deploy greater argumentative power (ibid.), which explains the argumentative force Welsh displays in the above sequence of two shots. As we shall see later, this is also one of two points which set the general tone of the voice-over commentary in Welsh's documentary.

As both previous case studies, Welsh's film is also shot exclusively in *Vérité* style. Nichols has noted a deficiency in Direct Cinema's approach, the lack of "context" (2001, p. 138) which haunts the observational documentary in general. In Welsh's documentary report we encounter this deficiency, which, according always to Nichols, occurs because of documentary's failure to provide adequate information on the "given moment in time" (ibid., p. 101). As Brecht has noted in his writing on naturalism, her work reflects "the symptoms of the surface of things and not the deeper causal complexes of society" (1980, p. 72). Although Welsh's TV documentary identifies the royal family as members of the Sunni Muslims minority ruling over the majority of the Shia Muslims, and voices complaints of royal corruption, it does not reach any depth on those issues and spends little time to explain why the Bahraini people felt suffocated by their regime in the first place. In the commentary of the film, Welsh mentions the ruling of one family in Bahrain, "with absolute power," since the nineteenth century (2011, m.s. 13:45) and all this time, as Lauryn Oates⁶⁴ put it, "democratic institutions... exist in

⁶⁴ According to her biography on *Ready Set Global* consulting company's website, Oates is an acclaimed activist of universal human rights, working to promote "education in conflict zones...., [she] holds a BA Honours in International Development Studies from McGill University, an MA in Human Security and Peace building from Royal Roads University, and is a PhD candidate in Language and Literacy Education

name only” (2011). However, while Welsh’s report sporadically provides basic elements of background history on the subject until the twenty-fifth minute, it does not provide much evidence of what it is to live under such a regime. For the Western audience, that is used to live in a democracy, the answer to the above question is crucial for interpreting the depicted events, and the absence of such information is disturbing. While, as we have seen, in both previous case studies, to an extent, the authors shed light on the causes of the demonstrators, Welsh does not explain adequately what united those people in the massive, so lively depicted, demonstrations. What do democracy and freedom mean to the struggling Bahrainis?

Of course, there are no grounds to doubt that the Bahrainis Welsh interviewed testified freely and in an open manner but preferred to talk on camera about their dreams rather than nightmares. A plausible explanation of their attitude is the blow of terror Bahrain authorities have unleashed upon anyone challenging the regime. But, since Welsh did not follow Direct Cinema’s mandate for eschewing voice-over commentary, she could have used this vehicle to provide more evidence on the life of the Bahrainis in her audiovisual report. Even though her subject was the uprising of the Bahraini people, Welsh also did not provide enough information on Bahrainis socio-political as well as economic status quo in her report. The film’s narrative line evolves around the people and their struggles, using images recorded at the Salmaniya Medical Complex, all through the documentary.⁶⁵ In short, Welsh draws a clear portrait of the urgent situation with telling actuality material. But her documentary record, “as Calder-Marshall said of

at the University of British Columbia.” Available at: <http://www.readysetglobal.com/laurynbio.html> (Accessed: 15 April 2012).

⁶⁵ This could be partly for practical reasons because, according to Welsh, it was the only place they were allowed to record unrestrictedly (2012, m.s. 11:07). According to one of the interviewees, Salmaniya is also the only public hospital in Bahrain (Welsh, 2011, m.s. 44:27).

Grierson's *Drifters*... [is] 'running away from its social meaning.' For it substitutes empathy for analysis, it privileges effect over cause" (Winston, 1988, p. 274). Had Welsh provided more information on the historical context of their revolution, Western audiences would have been able to understand the Bahraini people deeper and appreciate their causes better. The result is that, while *Shouting in the Dark* (Welsh, 2011) is engaging, both emotionally and intellectually, its lack of adequate historical context diminishes its status as evidence of what really happened in Bahrain behind the surface of things.

Regarding the voice of the commentary in the film, Oates describes a certain affinity of Welsh with the struggling people of Bahrain, and she is accurate in her description as the tone of Welsh's voice and the content of her commentary indicates. Furthermore, Oates wisely points out two fragments of the film's commentary which are key to understanding Welsh's general tone: her comment on the USA which remained *silent* (2011, m.s. 46:15) and her comment (2011, m.s. 47:12) on "the absence of foreign media to document the atrocities brazenly carried out by the government" (Oates, 2011). Although Welsh performed professionally in the voice-over commentary of the documentary, elements of irony and sadness and rage appear in her tone, openly revealing her stance by the side of the people. The above as well as the content of the commentary, which is obviously pro-protesters, indicate that, indeed, Welsh recorded also her sympathy for the resisting Bahrainis in her documentary. Furthermore, it was this great sympathy for the victimised people in Bahrain that made Welsh to go through all the pains she went through in order to deliver their sad story to the world.

The above is the only self-reflexive element of Welsh's documentary record and an indication that she was trying to be veracious when producing this film, because, by

admitting her bias, she indicates that her work and thoughts do correspond. Welsh does not pretend to be objective or balanced in her stance; she rather aspires to veracity as the latter has been defined in the Introduction of this thesis. Apart from the use of the internet for publicity and distribution, Welsh connects her work to the culture of Remix by including in her film mainly fragments of the local and other media TV broadcasts. Moreover, as in Friedberg's and Rowley's film, these fragments are incorporated with different frame ratios, like a TV screen inside the film's screen. This found material is used by Welsh in order to ridicule the official perspective and to disclose the immorality of the monarchs through the ironic juxtaposition with the actual footage which reveals the regime's brutality and lies. Every choice she had to make, from where to run when she could see nothing in front of her but a white cloud of tear-gas, to whom she would interview and in which manner, or how the footage would be edited, or any other choice a film-maker has to make, Welsh made it whole-heartedly on the side of the people. Moreover, she shot her film with great bravery and has had a really hard time putting all these telling images to record.

There is no trace of forgery in Welsh's images. Of course, she could have paid the interviewees in order to provide a false testimony but she could not have bribed the crowds recorded on video nor does the examination of the images reveal traces of manipulation of any kind. These floating crowds were there. These were real people with their impulses and causes, living real situations, and the spectators of Welsh's documentary have witnessed "change as it occurred" (Hitchcock on Grierson, 1965, m.s. 07:30).

III. E. A Short Epilogue to Chapter III.

In this Chapter we examined three case studies of documentary films involving massive civilian movements and we saw how the authorities treated the voice of powerless people to contest dominant explanations in USA, Canada, and Bahrain, in 1999, 2010, and 2011 respectively. In terms of form, we highlighted the fact that the current culture of Remix, in its basic sense, can be identified with the compilation documentary. Of course, as we saw in Chapter II, Remix is also able to involve extended interactivity, which the internet's participatory nature can afford. Since all films examined have incorporated digital footage found on the internet, they all rely, to an extent, on digital technology and the internet both as a source of audiovisual material and as a channel for publicity/distribution. This, most common, use of the digital communication platform takes advantage of the sharing culture of Remix on a basic level. All case studies examined above have one or two specific authors, while documentary projects taking advantage of the interactive possibilities of the digital 'network of the networks', as we have seen in Chapter II, could have a much more complex authorship status.

Although Vertov had worked in the technological environment of the 1920s he had set the agenda for a new form out of the combination of database and narrative (Manovich, 2001, p. 212). As we have seen in Chapter I, drawing from the paradigm of the Bolshevik newspaper, Vertov conceived the idea of participatory documentary work created and distributed by a network of ordinary people (the Kino-Eyes) in order to bring forward the interconnectedness of the people, facilitate their mutual understanding, and promote solidarity among them. In that respect, today's technological environment of digital networks and its capabilities has unleashed the power of Vertov's vision and has made it absolutely relevant to the new sharing culture

of Remix. Although most of the present digital documentary films, like the examined case studies, have distinct authors who can be held responsible as well as accountable for their films, as we have seen in Chapter II, digital technology and the internet are able to shift the traditional approach to documentary film-making. Indeed, the affordances of digital technology and, in particular, its networking abilities make possible the creation of multi-layered, multi-vocal, documentary projects which allow their participants to add or remove all sorts of evidential material and rearrange all their elements in order to express the participants' view of the historical world and its relations.

All case studies indicate that there are ways to elevate digital documentary's evidential status as well as enhance its claims to represent social reality. Although documentary film's trustworthy contribution to human knowledge "is [not] handed over by stylistic choice" (Morris, 2004), formal choices in relation to the content they provide are able to affect documentary's evidential force. As we have seen, a formal element, the interview, was used in all case studies with different results. On the one hand, in *Into the Fire* (Dicks, 2011), the interviews provide less information and are less engaging, while on the other, in *Bahrain: Shouting in the Dark* (Welsh, 2011), the same element was able to offer emotion and meaning more efficiently due to the interviews' content. Although both the aforementioned films do not provide adequate background information on their subjects, the more efficient use of the interviews affords the latter a higher evidential status. Furthermore, parts of the above case studies were shot in Direct Cinema style and indicate that certain documentary strategies can facilitate certain expectations. Direct Cinema, for example, with its candid approach is able to communicate *the feeling of being there* in a truthful manner, especially when people have no concern for the recording camera.

As we have seen in this Chapter, all examined case studies are hybrids to an extent, disobedient to any documentary movement's particular set of rules. In Chapter II, we have noted that hybridization is a current major trend in documentary film-making. As stated earlier, the current culture of Remix follows the Soviet tradition of the compilation documentary and Vertov's work on the creation of a network of creators participating in the construction of the representation as well as the interpretation of the historical world. Since the demand for medium specificity and the establishment of cinema as an art are not dominant today as they were in film theory before the 1960s (Turvey, 2008, p. 1), today's creators are able to incorporate several strategies and would not hesitate to combine different cinematic formal elements in order to make their view on the actual world available to their audience. Furthermore, according to Carroll, "in principle, there could be evidence for each of the knowledge claims that... a [documentary project or] film makes" (Carroll, 1996a, p. 238). In the digitized and networked world described in Chapter II, evidence can be presented in various forms by the use of both cinematic and extra-cinematic means (i.e. recorded lectures or interviews, still pictures, scanned documents, text, etc.). The incorporation of such means in all case studies, or the absence of them, had an effect on their evidential status.

This is What Democracy Looks Like (Friedberg and Rowley, 2000), as we have noted, appears to aspire to truthfulness as does *Bahrain: Shouting in the Dark* (Welsh, 2011), but the former affords a higher evidential status than the latter because of the richness of information it provides. Friedberg and Rowley provided valuable information on the historical context of their film mainly by the extended use of on-screen text, the voice-over narration, and two recorded interviews as an extra to the film included in the DVD. The distribution and exhibition capabilities of the DVD medium, that Vertov and Grierson prophesized in the 1920s, have long been surpassed by the capabilities of the

digital networks. Furthermore, in an internet documentary project of the age of Remix the opportunities of presenting evidence are as many as the affordances of the medium it uses to disseminate the project's view or views. Remix is a popular culture in Brecht's sense of popular, i.e. "intelligible to the broad masses, adopting and enriching their forms of expression / ... relating to traditions and developing them" (1980, p. 81).

An excellent example of the above mentioned popular culture of Remix is *18 Days in Egypt* (Mehta, 2012), which, according to its initiator, is a "living documentary" (Mehta, 2012). It is an interactive, crowd-sourced, documentary project that tells the story of the ongoing Egyptian revolution using its contributing audience's footage, photos, e-mails, texts, even "Tweets and Facebook status updates, all created during the revolution" (Mehta, 2012a). In the aforementioned Vertovian spirit, *18 Days in Egypt* (Mehta, 2012) is "harnessing networks to turn magnitudes of others into contributors" (Mehta, 2012) to the writing of the current Egyptian history. As we have seen in Chapter I, Vertov's idea of setting up a network of correspondents-collaborators in the 1920s had little success mainly because of the lack of appropriate technology. Science has lifted the technological barriers and in 2012 Jigar Mehta was able to initiate his documentary online project and invite people to make their own story streams, join an active community, and enrich the conversation with their testimonies. Following Vertov's not taken path (Hicks, 2007, p. 4), Mehta and the initiating team are also very concerned about "how to bring more people into the experience as storytellers, not just observers, and maintain a high level of quality in the stories" (Mehta, 2012). Six⁶⁶ fellow field producers have been hired by the project for "helping others use the site but also sourcing stories from those who don't have access to the Internet. They help digitally divided Egyptians get their stories onto the site" (ibid.). Thus, *18 Days in*

⁶⁶ The project is in the process of hiring fourteen more fellow field producers for the same purpose.

Egypt (Mehta, 2012) tackles one of the internet's threats that we have noted in Chapter II, the digital divide, and takes a step forward towards the democratic and emancipatory potential of the new medium. Since *18 Days in Egypt* (Mehta, 2012) is a continuing process as much as it is a documentary record of evidential value, a further, closer, and longer, study would be appropriate for building an understanding of the project's potential properties and capabilities. Future researchers are encouraged to take the opportunity and delve into this online prototype.

As the above project demonstrates, apart from its ability to take Vertov's dream further, Remix culture is also able to highlight facts that are not accurate and can provide missing crucial facts in a great variety of forms. The plurality of represented views and opinions, made possible in the current technological environment, is a factor which can bring documentary production closer to the real. For in this thesis, since the Introduction, reality is described in social terms, in Russell's sense, as the connection "between... perceptions... that makes us believe in a *common* external origin of the *different* related perceptions' (1985, p. 25, emphasis added). According to Ekman's psychological approach, "[t]here are two primary ways to lie: to *conceal* and to *falsify*" (1992, p. 28, emphasis in the original). In consequence, untruthfulness can result not only from the inclusion of false evidence in a narrative, but also from the omission of relevant information from it; aspiration to truthfulness, therefore, lies not only in distributing substantiated facts, but also in not omitting known, crucial, facts. Therefore, in order for a documentary film to aspire to truthfulness, it needs to be not only accurate but also complete. The omission of crucial facts could be considered either as a failure to attain an adequately professional documentary production standard, or as a straightforward intention to deceive the audience. In both cases, it is an element lowering the evidential status of documentary film.

In terms of content, the examination of all case studies, revealed certain patterns and raised certain questions. The first pattern one could identify is the distortion of the events by the mainstream news media in order to serve the authorities, offering them the pretext and the justification to use unnecessary force and abolish civil rights. This, of course, is not something new, for, as Brecht noted back in the 1930s, “the ruling classes use lies oftener than before— and bigger ones” (1980, p. 80). The examined case studies voiced the underrepresented, or even unrepresented, view of the oppressed and offered three particular instances of the way that internet-based documentary accounts provide an alternative view to most mainstream media representations of demonstrations. A second pattern is the use by the powers that be of every possible means available to them in order to criminalize dissent and silence the opposing voices with no consideration for the lawfulness of their acts, or human dignity, or even basic human rights. Two modern Western democracies as well as a Middle Eastern kingdom, in a similar manner, treated their people as the enemy and did whatever it took to stop the voicing of people’s opinion, even if during that process they had to abolish democratic rights and undermine the rule of law in their societies. These patterns are also present in the practical elements of the thesis (PaR) which also involve a massive civilian movement and shall be examined in the next Chapter.

In the case studies, we have also highlighted the double face that film-work, in conjunction with the internet and social networks, can present to civilian freedom movements. As Welsh’s documentary report indicates, one side of them is threatening while the other is emancipating. In the first two case studies, the use of the internet offers the civilian movements an opportunity to spread their word, both during as well as after the public unrest, while in the third case study the digital platform of

communication poses grave danger to the communicating members of the civilian movement, revealing their identity and facilitating a totalitarian regime to track them down and crush opposition. The above raise issues of ethics in documentary filmmaking, which shall be discussed later. In the next Chapter, the practical elements of the thesis attempt, in their own terms, to place the spectator in the middle of the described events in order to guide her heart and mind through experiencing them. In the last Chapter, *Syntagma 34* (Valsamis, 2011), *Syntagma Sq.* (ibid.), and *Syntagma Diary* (ibid.), are reflected upon and conclusions are drawn.

CHAPTER IV

IV. A. The Films' Context.

In the Introduction as well as in Chapter III, I have stated that the subject matter of the case studies is common with the practical elements of the thesis, as they all involve massive civilian movements, so the case studies are able to provide valuable historical context to the produced short films (PaR). The above claim that a film about demonstrations in USA in 1999, a film on public unrest in Canada in 2010, and a film about people's struggle against a tyrannical regime in Bahrain in 2011 can shed light on "the deeper causal complexes" (Brecht, 1980, p. 72) of the demonstrations and civil upheaval in Greece in 2011, may sound awkward to the viewer/reader. However, "the WTO in 1999 was the birth of a global citizen's movement for a democratic global economy" (*This is what Democracy Looks Like*, 2000, m. 01). In the following section of the thesis, we shall approach the demonstrators' perceived status of the world through the content analysis of the case studies, as well as with help from other documentary films which are able to shed light on their mind-set. As we shall see in this section of the last Chapter of the thesis, apart from subject matter, the case studies involve some of the same fundamental causes and forces at play as the produced short films, and they certainly share the deeply human elements that unite us all: a desire for a decent life and a hopeful future.

IV. A. 1 **The Debt Burden.**

In *Syntagma 34* (Valsamis, 2011), a slogan is heard in m. 02: “Oh, oh, oh, take the memorandum and out you go!” This slogan is but one of many about the memorandum and the Troika⁶⁷ that were heard during the event. People in Greece also perceived the role of official institutions as unjust, like people in Seattle did in 1999 regarding the WTO. John Pilger, in his enlightening *War by Other Means* (1992), draws a clear picture of the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) policies and their consequences for the people of the countries which have implemented them. As we shall see later, similar policies have also been imposed by the Troika in Greece. According to Pilger, IMF’s policies constitute a war on people and the planet, a proper war in spite of it being made by other means. The main weapon of this colonial-like type of war is debt (1992, m.s. 02:00). Debt has been used as a means of controlling people’s “resources, their labour, and their governments” (m.s. 04:10) since the establishment of the World Bank (WB) and the IMF in 1944, and it is also the beginning of what president Bush senior later called the New World Order (ibid., m.s. 04:28). In the second case study, *Into the Fire* (2010), Dicks took us on a ride to the current “New World Order amusement park” (h.m.s. 01:13:20) to ‘amuse’ us with the representation of massive abolishment of democratic rights, deceit, and intimidation of the public by the ruling elites, as Chomsky points out in the first case study. According to Bush and his followers, the New World Order will in fact be an order enforced by a global government.⁶⁸ The Greek protesters expressed their opposition to this New World Order during two days of general strike at

⁶⁷ The Troika is constituted by three organizations: The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Commission (EC), and the European Central Bank (ECB).

⁶⁸ According to the Greek newspaper ‘Ethnos’ (‘Nation’), after the meeting of the former Greek finance Minister, Evangelos Venizelos, with the Israeli Prime Minister, Simon Peres, on August 6th 2012, Mr. Venizelos made the following statement to the press: “Mr. Peres is well aware that the recycling of the International financial crisis can only be confronted through major institutional and political changes, through a new system of global political and economic governance” [Online]. Available at: <http://www.ethnos.gr/article.asp?catid=22767&subid=2&pubid=63694694> (Accessed: 08 August 2012).

Syntagma on June 28 and 29, 2011, as indicated by the banner: “NO to the World Government” (*Syntagma* 34, 2011, m.s. 21:15), and by a cry to the riot police, when they were beating protesters with their batons at the top of the stairs in Syntagma Square: “You have no honour, you have no homeland” (ibid., m.s. 22:35).

The main purpose of the Greek general strike was to protest the cruel and unfair, as an English banner informs us in *Syntagma* 34 (m. 02), measures imposed on Greek people by their government. These measures not only brought despair to the weakest in the society, and raised unemployment above 20%,⁶⁹ but are also comparable to the medical practice of bloodletting that was common in the Middle Ages, as the famous economist Paul Krugman has aptly stated (cited by Žizek in Athens, 2012, m.s. 12:20). Slavoj Žizek radicalizes Krugman’s metaphor further by stating that it is also an instance where financial doctors are not sure how the treatment works, and it is Greek people’s blood they are letting off, not the blood of their own people, some of whom even make a profit out of this blood shedding.⁷⁰ Apart from any other objections on the austerity measures, whether to the economics, legality, or the morals of the issue, there is a fundamental reason why these austerity measures ought to be protested. As Žizek noted, “the Greek state cannot ever repay the debt in this way. In a strange gesture of collective

⁶⁹ According to the Naftemporiki financial newspaper, unemployment in Greece reached 24,4% in June 2012 [Online]. Available at: <http://www.naftemporiki.gr/news/cstory.asp?id=2232549>, (Accessed: 06 September 2012). The Financial Times reported a youth unemployment rate close to 50%, in Spain and Greece, in 2012 [Online]. Available at: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/dca5fe48-4bf3-11e1-98dd-00144feabdc0.html#axzz266encmN5> (Accessed: 09 September 2012).

⁷⁰ Indeed, a recent eight minute report by Stephan Stuchlik, Kim Otto, and Andreas Orth, for *Monitor* #631, aired on 01.03.2012 by the German public ARD TV, confirms Žizek’s version of Krugman’s metaphor, at least the latter part of it. According to the above report, out of the last 130 billion euro loan by the Troika, Greece had received only 15.2 billion euro in cash by the start of 2012. At the same time, the German economy has benefited by about 50 billion euro from the cheap euro which increases Germany’s export trade. Germany also profits from the interest of the Greek loans and the difference between the interest rate at which it borrows money and that at which it lends has given it 40-60 billion euro in 2010 and 2011. Available in German at: <http://www.wdr.de/tv/monitor/sendungen/2012/0301/griechenland.php5> (Accessed: 31 July 2012). Aired later by the Greek public NET TV channel with Greek subtitles. Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ove3inAll6k> (Accessed: 31 July 2012).

make belief everyone ignores the obvious nonsense of the financial projection on which the European plans are based” (2012, m.s. 09:30). In other words, Greece is forced to pay a debt it could not possibly pay off by any means.⁷¹ Chomsky also subscribes to this point of view. In an interview for the Greek BHMagazino of October 16th 2011, he stated that the Troika is “busy destroying Greece” (2011, s. 23), because the measures it is proposing simply make the problems worse and impossible to be solved.⁷² Constant debt, as we saw above, was always the main weapon of the IMF in a colonial-like war, a war on people and the planet, a war conducted by non-conventional means.

In *Life and Debt* (Black, 2001), an interesting documentary film about the implementation of IMF’s policies in Jamaica and the devastating effect they had on Jamaican society, the former Prime Minister of the Jamaican Republic, Michael Manley, summarizes the basic early policies imposed by the IMF on the Jamaican government. Indeed, the similarities with the basic directions given by the Troika to Greece, in order to recover from its current financial crisis, are chilling (m.s. 10:00). According to professor of economics Michael Witter, the IMF initially set conditions that could not be met, inevitably the Jamaican government failed to meet them so it had to ask for another loan, on tighter conditions, and the debt of the country was constantly rising (mm. 14:09-15:40). According to Stephanie Black’s film, the conditions imposed by the IMF had devastating effects on the Jamaican infrastructures, education system, health system, agriculture, animal farming, and the dairy industry of the small country. WTO’s policies, driven further by the IMF, strangled the fragile Jamaican economy

⁷¹ According to the New York Times of July 25th 2012, Panagiotis Roumeliotis, a former Greek representative to IMF and Greece’s former finance minister, stated that the IMF knew “from the very beginning that this program was impossible to be implemented”. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C01E4DD1731F936A15754C0A9649D8B63&ref=paulg eitner> (Accessed: 31 July 2012).

⁷² Available at: <http://www.tovima.gr/vimagazino/interviews/article/?aid=426036> (Accessed: 02 March 2012).

and, as a farmer states on camera, these organizations were “fattening up few people at the expense of a whole... culture, that took years to build up” (mm. 22:45-26:10). Like the policies of the IMF in Jamaica, the measures imposed by the Troika on Greece brutally attack the most financially vulnerable of the Greeks in a country which, as Peter Gelderloos,⁷³ a young author, put it, “has been operating within a politics of crisis for a long time” (h.m.s. 01:06:52). But as we shall see in this section of the thesis, according to the protesters who met at Syntagma during the two-day general strike, what is at stake is much more than the redistribution of wealth; what is on the line is no less than the future of humankind.

IV. A. 2 Political Corruption and the Dawning of Fascism.

Apart from the austerity measures, the protesters at Syntagma had another reason for protesting, perhaps even more important than the first one. During the protests, several banners, such as: “scums of the parliament, wherever you go we’ll find you” (*Syntagma* 34, m.s. 01:27), and slogans, like the repeatedly voiced: “Let it burn, let it burn that whore-house of a parliament” (ibid., m.s. 14:53), expressed the protesters’ anger over the totally unacceptable level of corruption in Greek politics, which dominates the political system and invites the austerity measures.⁷⁴ Furthermore, in order to defend the

⁷³ In *Capitalism is the Crisis: Radical Politics in the Age of Austerity* (Truscello, 2011).

⁷⁴ According to Dimitris Bounias and Niki Kitsantonis’ recent New York Times report, “Missing List of Names Widens Greek Political Fissure,” in September 2012, a list came to light, containing 36 names of former and present politicians under investigation by the financial police (SDOE) on corruption charges. “In another investigation, the authorities are looking at a list of 54,000 people who transferred nearly \$29 billion abroad since 2009 and, in 15,000 cases, declared income significantly smaller than that found in the foreign accounts.” The report goes on to point out that several “investigations have also revealed the close ties between Greece’s political establishment and its oligarchs and business elite.” A list of 1,991 Greeks with deposits in an HSBC branch in Geneva had ‘disappeared’ from SDOE’s archive. There is growing public outrage that no Greek government wanted to touch the infamous list... that the French government gave Greece in 2010 to crack down on tax evasion” (Bounias and Kitsantonis, 2012).

corrupt system, the Greek government resorts to abolishing democratic rights and undermining the rule of law in Greek society in a desperate attempt to stop the voicing of people's opinion. As Lessig put it in regard to the administration in the USA, "until that corruption is solved we should expect little good from this government" (2008, p. 294); in fact, Greek people too do not expect much good from those governing them. During *Syntagma 34* (2011), a lot of songs, and slogans, like: "Bread, Education, Freedom, the Junta was not over in '73" (m.s. 11:30, 13:30), are about fascism and its terrible consequences that Greek people have suffered in the near past. Today, they need to fight the "global corporate Fascist takeover" (*Into the Fire*, 2011, m. 48) we encountered in Dicks' film; the events at Syntagma represent another battle in the "war on... people" (m. 42), that was declared by the USA authorities in 1999, as we saw in *This is what Democracy Looks Like* (Friedberg and Rowley, 2000). It is the same kind of war that the ruling family of Bahrain has waged on their own people, by the force of their absolute royal power (*Bahrain: Shouting in the Dark*, 2011, m.s. 13:45), in a country where "democratic institutions... exist in name only" (Oates, 2011). This is a war that makes the people rise against the fascist behaviour adopted by both modern democratic states (like USA, Canada, and Greece) and non-democratic states (like the kingdom of Bahrain). According to Zizek, this rather strange affiliation is the product of "the clear and present tendency of contemporary capitalism to suspend democracy" (2012, m.s. 05:24).⁷⁵ Many protesters, in the very beginning of all three short films,

⁷⁵ According to Maria Margaronis' report, entitled "Greek anti-fascist protesters 'tortured by police' after Golden Dawn clash," which was published in the Guardian of 9 October 2012, during a class with members of the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn, fifteen anti-fascist protesters were arrested in Athens and while in custody were subjected to what Dimitris Katsaris describes as an Abu Ghraib-style humiliation in the Police Headquarters (GADA). Mr. Katsaris, attorney of four of the protesters, has stated: "This is not just a case of police brutality of the kind you hear about now and then in every European country. This is happening daily. We have the pictures, we have the evidence of what happens to people getting arrested protesting against the rise of the neo-Nazi party in Greece. This is the new face of the police, with the collaboration of the justice system" (Margaronis, 2012).

declare their response to this tendency: “Struggle, struggle, class struggle will now be the answer.”

IV. A. 3 The Mainstream Media’s Role.

As we have seen in Chapter III, certain patterns emerged during the examination of the case studies. One of these recurring patterns is the way in which mainstream media represent civilian movements. In the first case study, the mainstream media presented the demonstrators as an unruly, violent mob, a menace to the city of Seattle. In the second case study, mainstream news media described the massive peaceful protests with images of vandalism aired repeatedly in order to demonize the protesters in Toronto. In the third case study, the director used the mainstream media’s broadcasts to ridicule the official perspective by juxtaposing it with actual footage, taken on the spot, revealing the regime’s brutality and the mainstream media’s straightforward lies. In all three cases the mainstream media, in harmonious cooperation with the authorities, distorted the events and offered them the pretext and the justification to undermine the rule of law, use unnecessary force, and abolish civil rights.

According to Brecht, in the 1930s, as we have seen, it was “the ruling classes” (1980, p. 80) which lied to the people and their lies were big and frequent. According to Chomsky, in 1992, it was the ruling elites which were served by the mainstream media which controlled “what people think” (*Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media*, 1992, m.s. 25:55) and helped them to marginalize human rights “in favour of the rights of private tyrannies” (ibid., h.m.s. 01:19:55). An Occupy Wall Street (OWS) aficionado, Harry Belafonte, stated in 2011 that the media are not peoples’ ally; “most

of the media is owned by those who control all the very things that oppress us” (*Rise Like Lions: OWS and the Seeds of Revolution*, 2011). According to a 2012 Al Jazeera report, mainstream media journalists in Greece put “the corporate agendas of their pay masters ahead of journalistic considerations” (s. 30). They push the agendas of the same political leaders who “created the crisis and insist today that they will overcome it” (ibid., m.s. 04:38). The mainstream media serve the ruling elites by “selling austerity and authoritarianism” (ibid., m.s. 07:30). It is the same corporate greed the mainstream media were serving in Seattle in 1999, at the expense of working people. The protesters in Syntagma Square declared their opposition to plutocracy’s greed and the unlawful coalition between the authorities and the mainstream media with a slogan which is not heard in any of my films on the event: “Cops, TV, Neo-Nazis, all bastards work in harmony.”⁷⁶

IV. A. 4 The People As the Enemy.

A second recurring pattern, in the case studies as well as in the PaR, is the treatment of people by the state as the enemy. In Syntagma too, as it is evident in the films, peaceful protesters were treated by the Greek authorities with great barbarism, as they faced pepper-spray, massive quantities of tear-gas, baton blows, authoritarianism, as well as random arrests and many other forms of unlawful behaviour which was recorded by many eyewitnesses. Greek people, during the two days of demonstrations under examination, were treated as the enemy by the very forces that are assigned to ‘serve

⁷⁶ It is worth noting here that protesters in Greece use the word ‘batsos,’ or ‘mpatsos,’ for cop. Except for cop, ‘batsos’ in Greek slang means also slap and its connotations are obviously pejorative.

and protect' them.⁷⁷ The description of the protesters' general behaviour in Seattle in 1999, noted in Chapter III, also reflects the general character of the protests in Syntagma in 2011. According to the eyewitness testimony in *This is what Democracy Looks Like* (Friedberg and Rowley, 2000), "there wasn't a riot, by any means of the word, but it was a manifestation of the people's voice" (m.s. 39:55). In Syntagma too, the answer to the manifestation of the people's voice by the police forces was brutal suppression, violation of basic human rights, criminalization, intoxication by toxic substances, and, in short, totalitarianism. The reaction of the vast majority of the people to the undemocratic manner of the authorities has been made available several times by a traditional slogan that is repeatedly heard all through *Syntagma 34* (2011); a slogan which unites many different groups, across the entire political spectrum, during demonstrations in Greece: "Cops, Pigs, Murderers."

Although the strike and the demonstrations at Syntagma on June 28 and June 29, 2011, were encouraged by GSEE and ADEDY, the two main trade union associations of the Greek private and public financial sector respectively, a lot of the protesters took to the streets individually, without a party ID in hand, to express their indignation. Most of the people beating the drums in the film were, in fact, members of the arts group of the Syntagma Square Popular Assembly (SSPA), which could be called the *Occupy Syntagma Square* because it has certain affinities with the Occupy movement in the USA, and shares some of its main features with other popular assemblies in Europe, the Arab world, and North Africa as well. Syntagma Square had been occupied by the

⁷⁷ According to a current Amnesty International report on Police Violence in Greece, human rights violations by law enforcement officials "are not just 'isolated incidents' and should not continue to be treated as such, but should be rather seen as a pattern of abuses" (2012, p. 49). Greek authorities' violations "include torture and other ill-treatment during arrest or detention, misuse of firearms, excessive use of force and other violations in the policing of demonstrations.... and impunity for these crimes persists" (ibid., p. 7).

SSPA since May 25th 2011; the assembly remained at Syntagma until it was brutally dispersed on July 28th of the same year. I had spent enough time with the assembly since their occupation of Syntagma Square to be able to witness that its organizing committees were in close contact with several similar committees across Europe and the world and they translated their correspondence in at least six languages.

According to *Rise Like Lions: OWS and the Seeds of Revolution* (Noble, 2011), Occupy Wall Street (OWS) is inspiring, and has drawn inspiration from the assemblies of countries like Iceland, Spain, and Greece, which expressed their opposition to the corporate state. To these assemblies, “in many ways, O.W.S is a late starter” (h.m.s. 01:13:00). Other similar assemblies OWS has drawn inspiration from include popular assemblies in Egypt, Tunisia, and Mexico (ibid.). According to the speaker in m.s. 52:39, the great unease in the current world is expressed by similar popular movements on many continents, and they are “about the same thing, we have to take back our world.” The above film is a compilation documentary about the OWS and Occupy Together movements in the USA. It mainly consists of footage found on the web and, like the PaR of the thesis, it acknowledges its main source of material by incorporating shots with different frame sizes without altering their original proportions. In the film, Noble describes the ravaging effects that the USA’s policies have on the majority of people in this vast country. As the film explains, vital public services, like the education and health systems, are being destroyed in the USA, unemployment has reached figures similar to those of Greece in many states, and poverty amongst the general population is currently a major issue. Furthermore, there is also a sense of wide-spread corruption of the authorities in the USA, and a common belief of a great number of citizens that the political system has failed them. The same sense of corruption, and the belief in the political system’s failure, is expressed in the slogan: “What with Skopje, Turkey, and

Macedonia? The enemy is within the banks and ministries” (*Syntagma 34*, 2011, mm. 01-02).

In his film, Noble informs us that, like the economic measures enforced in Jamaica by the IMF, the USA policies imposed upon the domestic population fatten up “few people at the expense of... [the] whole” (*Life and Debt*, 2001, m.s. 22:45). According to *Rise Like Lions: OWS and the Seeds of Revolution* (2011), the Occupy movement wants “to reverse the corporate coup that’s taken place in the United States” (m.s. 14:40), because if people do not “break the back of corporations we are all finished anyway since they are rapidly trashing the ecosystem on which the human species depends for survival” (ibid., m.s. 14:49). Like the popular movements in the aforementioned countries, the Occupy movement involves diverse groups and individuals whom “no party represents” (ibid., h.m.s. 01:01:02) and many different agendas are at play within the movement. However, the Occupy movement propagates certain values and promotes certain behaviours. Most importantly, it advocates a shift of cultural values, it embraces the sharing culture described in Chapter II, and envisions a unity of people with different ways to relate to each other from the currently dominant ones. People in *Syntagma 34* (2011) express the same eagerness for solidarity and emancipation in the following announcement:

Let us each turn and look at our neighbour, look into his eyes
and remember these moments for the rest of our lives! The best
thing we have gained in these times is this feeling we each have
for our neighbour, and this no one can take from us. No person
can deprive us of this feeling” (m. 13).

IV. A. 5 The Need for Change.

In the same spirit, *Capitalism is the Crisis: Radical Politics in the Age of Austerity* (Truscello, 2011), another film which reveals its allegiance to the sharing culture of Remix through the use of shots with different frame ratios, quotes the leading German anarchist of the late 19th century Gustav Landauer: “The state is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently toward one another” (m. 05). Like Noble’s aforementioned film, Professor Michael Truscello’s documentary also supports the idea that a coup d’état by corporations has taken place. This view is further elaborated by Chris Hedges, author of the *Death of the liberal Class* (2010). In Truscello’s film he states that “corporations have the strange pathology where they turn everything into a commodity; human beings become commodities, the natural world becomes a commodity, and you exploit these commodities until exhaustion or collapse” (m. 01). According to Naomi Klein, author of *The Shock Doctrine* (2007), governments “use a crisis to centralize power, to subvert democracy, [and] to avoid public debate” (h.m.s. 01:17:54). Professor David McNally, author of ‘Global Slump: The Economics and Politics of Crisis and Resistance’ (2010), notes that “new ways of organizing society” (h.m.s. 01:30:26) must be found or, as Noble put it in his film, people must build an alternative political system, “a new kind of legitimacy, one based on people and not on money” (m.s. 24:17). According to Noble’s film, although many participants in OWS welcome reforms, they “believe that profound structural changes are required of our institutions” (h.m.s. 01:00:22), if people want to build a meaningful, participatory, truly democratic society with environmental consciousness (*Rise Like Lions: OWS and the Seeds of Revolution*, 2011).

During the demonstrations of June 28th and 29th 2011 at Syntagma Square, Greek people expressed their desire to change the structure of the Greek political system in favour of the people. Greek demonstrators declared their discontent with the “decaffeinated democracy” (Zizek, 2012, m.s. 17:47) that the main Greek political parties have been offering them for many long years. They fought cheerfully, with self abandonment, the fascist reaction to their just demands by the Greek authorities; they also declared their indignation for their oppressors and their commitment to keep on fighting “to take back democracy” (*This is what Democracy Looks Like*, 2000, m.s. 34:30). The young man, on the face of whom *Syntagma 34* (2011) freezes in the end, most probably had not taken part in the demonstration; he was rather passing by the Syntagma metro station heading to his destination. He was waiting for his train to arrive, three levels and several meters beneath the surface, and the air he was breathing was thick with tear-gas. Although there is no way of knowing what this particular young man was thinking at the time of recording, he might be trying to rethink what it means “to be a human being in the twenty first century” (*Rise Like Lions: OWS and the Seeds of Revolution*, 2011, m. 53).⁷⁸

IV. B. *Syntagma 34*, *Syntagma Sq.*, *Syntagma Diary*, (Valsamis, 2011).

This written document critically reflects on the production process of the above short films and discusses issues of the methodology chosen for their recording as well as ethical issues embedded in documentary film-making practices that use images of human beings to fulfil their tasks. The short documentaries I submit on a DVD together with the written thesis are low-cost digital productions in search of unscripted,

⁷⁸ See more evidence on those issues on the links page of the film’s website in: <http://www.documentarytruth.com/links.html>

revelatory, cinematic moments. For their making I have adopted low-cost video equipment and production methods in order to investigate the ways, or circumstances, that elevate digital documentary's evidential status and enhance its claims to represent social reality. I used every means at my disposal to try to capture the core of the events and communicate effectively "the significance of facts" (Mies van der Rohe cited in Harvey, 2000, p. 31).

The first of the films, *Syntagma 34* (2011, 29 m.), functions as an audiovisual pool which, together with the internet, provide footage to two variations of it. The first variation, *Syntagma Sq.* (2011, 6 m.), portrays the thirty four hour duration of the event condensed in six minutes. The second variation of the pool-film, *Syntagma Diary* (2011, 5 m.), is a video diary portraying the first six hours of the event in five minutes of filmic time. Six hours of shot material, and footage downloaded from the internet, were cut down to 29 minutes to form the pool-film which provided footage to its variations. In consequence, the techniques chosen in the shooting of the footage are common to all three films. As we shall see later, despite the fact that all films use the same footage they produce different results, and reveal different levels of reality. I chose to use almost entirely observational characteristics in the shooting of the event for practical as well as for theoretical reasons. The former being the specific equipment I had available at the time and the latter my agreement with, Bruzzi's statement, as noted in Chapter I, that "[t]he observational mode, despite the vigorous arguments mounted against it, remains extremely influential, for it freed both the style and content of documentary" (2000, pp. 67-68).

IV. B. 1 The Shooting Method.

The shooting of the attached documentaries conformed to all of the rules proposed by Direct Cinema as a general method, according to both Nichols (2001) and Rosenthal (2002), that we have noted in Chapter I. During the recording I also employed “hand-held camera and live, synchronous sound” (Mamber, 1972, p. 79). Most importantly, I have used “real people in undirected situations” (ibid.). During the shooting of the films I followed all eight strategies that Vertov recommended to the Kino-Eyes for shooting on field except for the fourth one; “[f]ilming when the attention of the subject is artificially diverted” (cited in Hicks, 2007, p. 25). There was no reason to adopt this fourth strategy to minimize the performative aspect of my subjects’ behaviour because their attention was naturally diverted (third Vertovian strategy) anyway in most of my shots.

Furthermore, in our current times, when modern technology has made *Vérité* practitioners’ wildest dreams come true through the wide spread of cheap, absolutely portable, synchronous-sound-recording equipment, it is possible to avoid performance, although filming from an open observational point, by recording while several other recording devices are pointing at the same subject from different angles. During most of my shooting in thirty four hours in Syntagma there were quite a few protesters, amateurs as well as professionals, pointing at the same direction at the same moment with different recording devices (video and still cameras, mobile phones). The wide availability of cheap recording equipment has turned the above described situation into a most usual one during events which involve huge crowds of people, and under this circumstance subjects would have a hard time to perform for the camera. Although they are able to notice the imaging devices and be aware that they may be recorded at any

time, they are not in a position to distinguish which of the cameras pointing at them are actually recording and they are not able to determine which angles they are recorded from. Thus, the possibility of performance during such conditions is reduced because recorded subjects would have to perform for every possible shooting angle and during all of the time. Despite the above, during my shooting the first strategy proposed by Vertov proved to be indispensable and still able to provide a ‘golden rule’ for avoiding performance on field. “Filming unawares” (ibid.) remains a key filming strategy as it epitomizes Vertov’s tactics for the above purpose.

All films were shot with a Panasonic NV-GS75 mini DV camera and edited on a dual core laptop PC with Adobe Premiere 2.0. The pool-film and its second variation, *Syntagma Diary*, follow the exact chronological order of the events. The first film variation, *Syntagma Sq.*, follows the events in chronological order as well, but not exactly. In order to elevate the evidential status of my work in all three films, I chose to emphasize the element of unity of the people in a forceful but peaceful protest of indignation, full of slogans, songs, and massive participation. Moreover, the following of the chronology of the events in the pool-film, which describes the whole event, clearly reveals the duration and the dynamics of the civil upheaval as well as the determination of the people involved. As it is evident in *Syntagma 34*, in the morning of the second day of the protests people came of their own free will, regardless of any trade union mandate, and they gradually formed a huge crowd full of energy and passion for a second time at Syntagma Square.

In addition to the above, I had to make the obvious choice of using non-Direct Cinema elements in order to compensate for Direct Cinema’s limitations. Though a valuable basis, the Direct Cinema principles could not fully provide the intellectual

understanding needed to arrive at concrete knowledge of the subject filmed. Thus, in trying to best serve the quest for knowledge, in other words to help the audience comprehend what really happened, why such a huge crowd gathered in massive protests and what is the common essence of these gatherings with similar ones at different places and times, I chose to supplement the Direct Cinema techniques with written text that has been incorporated in the content analysis of the case studies as well as in the previous section of the thesis and the project's website. In order to elevate the films' evidential status, the written text provides information on issues which, although relevant and enlightening, are exterior to the films, as well as clarifies the facts depicted in the films. As we shall see later, *Syntagma Diary* does not rely on the same contextual information as the other two short films do, because it subscribes to another point of view. Apart from the need for supplementation and the consequent hybridization that derives from it, during the shooting of the event, Direct Cinema's legacy, as given to us by filmmakers from Drew to Wiseman, has been used successfully as a key strategy for the pursuit of cinematic truthfulness "or the quest for knowledge" (Carroll, 1996b, p. 300) through documentary film-making.

The only self-reflexive element I have used while shooting the event is that I have adopted the viewpoint of the demonstrators, who in most dominant accounts of the event remain underrepresented for reasons that have been exposed in the previous section of the thesis. Thus, my sympathy for them and my support for their causes are disclosed. During the shooting of the films, I had positioned the camera amongst the protesters, and not amidst the police, and, as Welsh did in the third case study, I had positioned myself wholeheartedly on the side of the people. Another interesting aspect of my filming technique, also revealing my attitude towards the subjects of my film, is that in most shots I have filmed people from behind and I have not used many close-up

shots. The above, together with the several kinds of masks people were wearing in many shots, had the effect of trading the individual for the collective experience during the event, signalling the passage from the egocentric 'I' to the communal 'We'. Thus, *Syntagma 34* and *Syntagma Sq.* do not follow a character, do not recount the story of a man against some repressing institutions; they rather illustrate the story of a people against the authorities, which, while democratically elected, are reckless with their electorate. The sense of unity and determination of the people are underlined more effectively in the pool-film by the shots of the applauding hands, above the people's heads, that keep the rhythm during the spontaneous concert, given by well known and not so well known Greek artists, in the end of the first day. In *Syntagma 34*, the feeling of community and solidarity, the sense that we are in this situation together, is also reinforced by the heroic, revolutionary, nature of the songs themselves and highlighted with the announcement that is heard in m.s. 13:50: "The best thing we have gained in these times is this feeling we each have for our neighbour... No person can deprive us of this feeling!"

Syntagma 34, and its variations, raised a number of interesting questions, involved a plethora of choices -regarding the production methods, resources and stylistic elements used- and led to some fertile thinking concerning the role of those choices and of digital technology in the making of a film that attempts to investigate the evidential status of digital documentary film-making and the authorial choices that may enhance or undermine its claims to truthfully represent social reality. The Direct Cinema principles provided a good basis in that pursuit and led to great directness and truthfulness during the shooting of the event. For instance, the quite basic equipment used allowed for greater freedom of movement, without the artificial limitations of a studio, or of cumbersome machinery, and made possible "the use of real people in undirected

situations” (Mamber, 1972, p. 79). The occasionally shaky image, which resulted from the lack of a tripod, and the shooting position within the big crowd whose moves I had no control over, also contributed to the overall sense of directness the films provide.

IV. B. 2 The Digital Sublime.

As noted in Chapter II, digitization has made possible the inclusion of fragments of reality captured on the spot by ordinary people, in several forms (text, diagrams, still pictures, supplementary interviews or other footage etc.), not in the film itself but within the platform used to disseminate the film, turning documentary films into documentary projects. The culture of Remix gives reality a discursive character, discussion by definition takes two or more persons to occur and so does formed reality, the product of the interactive Remix culture made possible by digital media which provide a base for communication among people. As we also saw in Chapter II, the cheaper digital technology is and the more widely spread among the general public, the easier Remix culture is able to carry the voice of the repressed, the underrepresented, in a society. This is especially true during one-time events, when film-makers do not have the chance to shoot some footage, edit it, and then go back to shoot some more in order to incorporate it into their film and complete it. In addition, as we have seen in Chapter III, through the immediacy and the plurality of views Remix is able to provide, people can enrich their forms of expression and relate them to traditions and develop them (Brecht, 1980, p. 81).

In Remix culture, of course, authorship becomes meaningless. Who is the author of a conversation? Obviously all people involved in this conversation; any discussion would

have an initiator but none could have a sole author. But even if Remix is a cultural element the majority of current documentary production does not afford to ignore, at least in its basic sense, it is not the only way to elevate documentary film's evidential status. The un-intrusive stance proposed by Direct Cinema, which is the only strategy of the shooting of the event, provides a valuable tool for the accurate rendering of the feeling of the moment, as Leacock so excitedly announced (in *Cinéma Vérité: Defining the Moment*, 2006, m.s. 12:30). As Drew illustrated in *Faces of November* (1964), a twelve-minute short film about the impact of Kennedy's assassination on people in the USA, there is a "kind of truth that can only be gotten from personal experience" (Drew in *Cinéma Vérité: Defining the Moment*, 2006, m. 19). Although I have used many other documentary sources in order to explain the portrayed incidents in written text, a fully interactive approach, based on the plurality of visual elements, would not be beneficiary to this *kind of truth*, since no person is able to render my own feelings more accurately than myself. Of course, Remix and the extended interactivity it affords is an important characteristic and provides fertile field for further research on film and human studies in general, on software engineering as well as on web design. The production of suitable software is a highly probable necessity for researching the interactive elements of Remix and web design's abilities to handle and distribute information seem to be at the heart of such an endeavour.

IV. B. 3 The Goals of the Thesis.

The task undertaken by this thesis is to investigate cinematic truth in the digital era and to highlight the elements which are able to elevate documentary's evidential status in its findings. As defined from the beginning, reality comes under the condition of

community, it synthesizes multiple views into a larger picture. In Chapter I, we have also seen that reality incorporates traces of the past (like those highlighted by Curtis and Flaherty in their representation of isolated cultures) as well as traces of the future (like Vertov's communist decoding of the world which, according to Manovich, was a way to represent traces of his ideal Marxist-Leninist future to come). As we have seen in Chapter III, an important element, the interview, has been used extensively in all three case studies with different results as regards their evidential status. Therefore, Morris' statement that style or technique as such cannot guarantee the delivery of truth has been confirmed. As we saw, the meaning of stylistic choices may vary according to the content of the images (what exactly the images depict) and the juxtaposition of the images (their relative position within the film), as the Kuleshov experiment has made evident early on. As mentioned in the Introduction, Rodney King's tape indicates the moving image's complex nature which, as the Soviet school demonstrated, can be used to construct arguments, through the temporal editing of audiovisual material, and provide both emotional and intellectual stimuli. If the facts documentary films make available are not falsified, nor known facts are omitted, documentary films have a certain value as evidence regardless of stylistic choice.

What I tried to do with my shooting at Syntagma during 34 consecutive hours was an attempt to honestly record what took place during the massive and peaceful protests of the Greek people in Syntagma Square on 28 and 29 June 2011 as a response to the unfair austerity measures that the Greek government voted, which placed the burden of increasing state revenues on the weaker members of society and led to a deep recession and unemployment while leaving corruption and the privileges of the few untouched. As Leacock wrote about the shooting of Drew's landmark film, *Primary* (1960), I tried to capture "the flavor, the guts of what was happening. No interviews. No reenactments.

No staged scenes” (1990, p. 17). Furthermore, my goal was to investigate the function of my choices of production methods and stylistic elements in relation to the evidential status of the finished films.

IV. B. 4 Issues of Documentary Ethics.

Closely related issues, that we have encountered all through the thesis so far, are ethical questions regarding mistreatment and exploitation of the filmed subjects. The main ethical issues connected with *Syntagma 34*, and its film variations, are raised by the fact that it is real people that have been included in the documentary records, who have not given their prior informed consent. According to Rose and three other authors he mentions, “when photographs are made of people in a research project, specific ethical issues arise in relation to the photos that are distinct from ethical considerations attaching to the other elements of the project” (2007, p. 251). In 2006 the British Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) published a Framework for Research Ethics, which was revised in 2010 and in which it recognizes “six key principles of ethical research” (ESRC, 2012, pp. 2-3) involving human beings. The PaR of the thesis complied with all six ESRC key rules except for the second one: “[P]articipants must normally be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved” (ibid.). The PaR of the thesis did not obey the second of the British ESRC rules because “[i]nformed consent... [was both] impracticable... [and] meaningless... as [is the case in] research on crowd behaviour” (ibid., p. 29). There were cases where people approached me while I was recording and put their hands or body in front of the lens in order to cover it. In other cases they told me straightforwardly that they did not

wish their presence there to be disclosed in public and did not consent to the recording of their image. Unfortunately, some of them were not so kind in their demand but in any case I did not use the specific shots no matter how important I considered them for the films.

As discussed in relation to the case studies, documentary film might present risks for the subsequent treatment of the filmed subjects by the authorities that be and of course may also raise questions of privacy violation, the consequences of which cannot be fully fathomed by the film-maker. In the case studies, we have seen a serious danger that documentary film-making could pose to civilian movements by making publicly available the identities of the protesters. We have seen that in two of the case studies the internet and social networks had an emancipating effect for the protesting groups and individuals while in the third case study their results were threatening. On the one hand, the use of the internet facilitated effectively the communication between protesting individuals and groups, while on the other the digital platform of communication disclosed their identity and aided a brutal regime to track down protesters and silence their opposing voices in a sadistically brutal way. As we have also seen, the above raises major moral issues regarding documentary film-making practice in the digital age. As we saw in Chapter I, ethical questions regarding exploitation and mistreatment of the people filmed (Winston, 1995, p. 21) date back to Flaherty and the dawning of documentary cinematography. Modern technology, as we saw in Chapter III, causes the reaffirmation of those questions today, in an urgent manner, because of the massive quantity of publicly available still and moving images and the dire consequences this broad availability may have on the subjects of documentary film. Although documentary film-makers today can still be “creative and thus artistic,... [they cannot afford to be] absolved from the everyday norms of moral and ethical behaviour” (ibid.,

p. 24), for if they do behave recklessly regarding everyday moral values they might be responsible for the future incarceration, torture and even murder of protesters in large numbers.

During the recording of the films not only did I not disclose the identities of people who expressed their opposition to having their image made publicly available, as mentioned earlier, but I also rarely recorded the peripheral conflicts between the riot police and demonstrators, whether the latter were engaged in unlawful acts or were merely bystanders close to the pockets of conflict. In fact, I chose to barely record the clashes for two reasons: Firstly, in order to avoid revealing any of the protesters' identifiable characteristics. That is also why I never provided close-up shots of the protesters who fought to keep the police forces away from Syntagma Square and from the main body of the demonstrators. Secondly, because the number of people involved in these clashes was insignificant compared with the total number of people involved in the demonstrations, during the thirty four hours of my shooting at Syntagma.⁷⁹ As mentioned earlier, the vast majority of the protesters were not involved in any kind of fight, therefore the scarce recording of clashes on the field indicates my aspiration to objectivity. While, as we saw earlier, the adoption of the protesters' point of view in all the shots I have used in the film reveals a certain affiliation of mine with the protesters, I have also tried to be objective in my stance. Not, of course, in the sense of the objective journalism, which, as we saw in Chapter I, was based on official information and ended up parroting the official interpretation and purveying the "governmental publicity" (Kaplan, 2002, p. 193), as journalists during the early twentieth century were doing in the USA. But rather in the sense of accurately representing the incidents I have

⁷⁹ There are no official statistics, or trustworthy estimations, on the subject but my personal estimation is that no more than 100-150 protesters were engaged in fights with the police, at the nearby areas of Syntagma Square, at any given moment whereas the total number of protesters during two days of general strike may well be over 500.000.

witnessed, and placing emphasis on the actually salient features of the situation described, in order to best facilitate the understanding of the subject by the spectator.

IV. B. 5 The Films.

Syntagma 34.

As stated above, during the shooting of the films I have tried to record the events most directly, with the least intrusion, and to adhere as closely as possible to the principles of Direct Cinema, acting as a *fly on the wall*. The editing of the pool-film also obeyed most of Direct Cinema's conventions except for two elements. The first of them is twofold. In m.s. 10:30 I used a frame within frame effect; these two shots taken at the same moment from different viewing angles make explicit that footage from more than one camera has been incorporated in the film. Furthermore, while the vast majority of the audiovisual material has been recorded solely by me, I also used videos with different frame ratios, and different image qualities, as I found them on the World Wide Web. I chose to incorporate these shots in my film without altering their proportions, incoherently, in order to allow different sources to stand. As a result, the look and feel of these shots, like the entire concert sequence, differ from the rest of the film. Different recordings in different frame ratios are a way to acknowledge the internet as a source of some of the footage and the film's allegiance to the sharing culture that the internet affords. The above element has been incorporated in all three PaR films in order to openly reveal the relationship of my work to the important culture of Remix in its basic sense, and to pay a tribute to Vertov's early formalist approach to documentary cinematography, which, as we have seen in Chapters I and II, is still of great relevance

today. As we shall see later, Vertov's approach is further articulated in *Syntagma Sq.*, the first film variation.

The second non-Direct Cinema element, I have incorporated during the editing of the pool-film, has been chosen for the purely practical reason of aiding the non Greek-speaking spectators to understand the nature of the demonstrators' demands and, in consequence, to better understand the situation they were engaged in.⁸⁰ I offered on-screen text for an English translation of the most important banners that appear in the recorded images as well as the most important slogans that people were shouting during the demonstrations and the important announcements that are heard during the film. The mix of these two elements in the PaR films serves the need to educate and inform the audience by presenting a creatively treated actuality (Grierson, 1966, p. 13) while following the hybridization trend of current documentary cinematography, as highlighted in Chapters II and III, in a postmodern era that "implicitly rejects the boundary distinctions of prior filmic modes" (Arthur, 1993, p. 127).

As Wiseman remarked on his own editing technique, I, too, feel that "I have an obligation to the people who are in... [the film], to cut it so that it fairly represents what I felt was going on at the time, in the original event" (2002). Of course, one could reasonably argue that the continuity editing I used in the pool-film, which augments story clarity at the expense of style, is not unique and this film could have been made by any protester with an imaging device. The fictive author of *Syntagma Diary* provides evidence of the above hypothesis. Yet, although a lot of short documentary accounts of the same, as well as similar, events can be found on youtube, the vast majority of them

⁸⁰ Another element that I have added during the editing of the film, and may be considered as an effect, is fade-outs and fade-ins in the sound track of some shots which would have been highly problematic and disturbing to the audience had they been left intact.

tend to highlight the spectacular, the extraordinary, which would be able to astonish the audience. The result is that, even if some of these accounts are very interesting visually, even stunning, their value as evidence is decreased because they place emphasis on the aspect of battle, which they describe as ever-present, and downplay the core of the events, which, in most cases, was the attack of the authorities on peaceful protesters who reacted in a matter-of-fact manner.⁸¹

As we have seen in Chapter III, intellectual understanding through the provision of information regarding the historical context that the presented images are part of is a necessary condition for achieving a higher evidential status and the lack of this kind of information is a noted deficiency in Direct Cinema's approach and in observational documentary in general (Nichols, 2001, p. 138). On the other hand, as noted in Chapter I, Direct Cinema suggests that direct observation of a people, or of an event, best aids the audience to draw their own conclusions about the meaning of the film they are watching. In any case, intellectual understanding, together with "the feeling of being there" (Leacock in *Cinéma Vérité: Defining the Moment*, 2006, m.s. 12:30), generated by the visual stimuli of the imagery, enables the spectator to participate as fully as possible.

Since *Syntagma 34*, as stated in the Introductory Statement, is part of one out of three thesis components which complement each other and should be examined together and is neither a commercial project nor targets the general audience, I chose not to offer the film's historical context either as on screen text or in the form of voice-over

⁸¹ Two remarkable examples of this tendency, as well as of the current culture of Remix, are: *Which Side Are You On* (Konstantinos GR, 2011). Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bKOz4QX5PY> (Accessed: 16 August 2012). *The End of Fear* (Magiconteam, 2011). Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEQuLzTzq5k> (Accessed: 16 August 2012).

commentary. Instead, I preferred to provide this kind of information in the written thesis and specifically in the content analysis of the case studies as well as in the previous section of this Chapter and on the website dedicated to the films. I have made this choice for two reasons: In order to avoid any disturbance in the flow of the events, which would most probably lead to a distancing effect and would interfere with rendering how it felt to be at the particular place at the given time, and as a way to simulate the rising culture of Remix, even though without its interactive elements, in my study. In consequence, the truthful representation of the filmic events is enriched by the elucidation of crucial information from other sources in order to make *Syntagma 34* not only accurate but also complete. The undisturbed flow of the events also guided my decision not to include any interviews in the films, even though I recognized the need to reveal the perspective of the demonstrators and their reasons for assembling at Syntagma. Furthermore, I feel that the inclusion of interviews would have diminished the evidential value of the particular film, as I agree with Leacock that although the interview technique is most popular among TV practitioners, “[i]t is an approach that is wide open to abuse, so easy to influence in anyway that suits your purpose” (Leacock, 1990, p. 17). Therefore, I preferred to elaborate on the demonstrators’ *raison d’être* in the written thesis and the website as well.

In *Syntagma 34*, the heart-beat-like percussive sound produced by the demonstrators truthfully presents the reaction of the main, peaceful, body of demonstrators to the constant tear-gassing by the police forces. Contrary to main-stream media representations, despite any peripheral conflicts, the vast majority of the demonstrators responded to the authorities’ brutality by applauding when attacked with tear-gas, by making music and dancing with their masks on, giving images of a festive, carnival-like quality, reminiscent of the Bacchic rituals on the ancient Greek mountains and their

riotous proceedings. The masks, which most of the demonstrators as well as the riot police were wearing, contribute to a strong feeling of performance throughout the pool-film, which reaches a climax during the actual performances by professional musicians. Apart from a sense of solidarity and harmonious cooperation between the people, the protesters who form a human chain in order to carry bottles of water and clean the streets from the toxic chemicals also add to this feeling of the performative (*Syntagma 34*, mm. 09-10). The words of William Shakespeare come to mind: "All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players: They have their exits and their entrances" (As You Like It, Act II, Scene VII). It is as if we were witnessing the backstage action before we experience yet another part of the protest theatre play on screen. In this sense, the spirit of Dionysus, the protector of theatre, was once again present in *Syntagma 34*; although the ancient god required from his followers to act wildly, let us not forget that, according to Euripides, Bacchus was also a lover of peace (Bacchae, 419-420).

Syntagma Sq.

Apart from the above elements, the first film variation deviates further from the Direct Cinema rules and the postmodern hybridization trend becomes more relevant to it. The first variation of *Syntagma 34* condenses twenty nine minutes into six. As a result *Syntagma Sq.* tells the story of the thirty four hour event in six minutes and preserves the spirit of the events in a significantly reduced amount of time. Although the first variation excludes twenty three minutes of the pool-film and, consequently, about five hours and fifty four minutes of shot footage, it conveys most of the information of the pool-film by drawing more heavily on the internet as a source of material, and by caring less for distinctive filmic modes. *Syntagma Sq.* took a more formalist path during its editing, the informative slogans that are not heard as well as the banners that do not

appear in the first film variation of the pool-film have been replaced by a ballad song (composed in memory of the event) and voice over commentary found on the internet. While a great part of the pool-film's information is absent in its first variation, at least in the absolute manner of a slogan or a banner, it is presented in a more abstract form through the lyrics of a song and fragments of relevant voice over commentary. Although not shot by more than one hundred people, and not adopting the interview technique, the first film variation is relevant to the first case study film.⁸² As the first case study, *Syntagma Sq.* treats the raw material of actuality as parts of its arguments which are presented in a formalist manner. Like Friedberg's and Rowley's film, the first film variation is indebted to Vertov and the current culture of Remix, described in Chapter II. In a Vertovian way, *Syntagma Sq.* uses music and image effects (like superimpositions and a freeze frame) freely in order to guide the spectator's feelings and thoughts. It is as honest as the pool-film and they both share the point of view discussed in the first section of the Chapter.

The ambient rhythmic background sound, produced by the protesters' drums, and impromptu drums, which formed a sound *leit motif* running all through the pool-film, allowed both emotional engagement of the audience and a more genuine response to the subject filmed. In the first film variation it has been replaced by music and voice-over narration, which produce emotional engagement and understanding respectively. In its deviation from the Direct Cinema norms, the first film variation interferes in the rendering of the feeling of what it was to be at the particular place at the given time and leads the spectator to a distance. *Syntagma Sq.* decreases the viewer's first person experience by replacing the clean captured audio, and the slower paced editing rhythm of the pool-film, with a much more complex, artificial, sound environment, and a much

⁸² *This is what Democracy Looks Like* (Friedberg and Rowley, 2000).

faster rhythm. On the other hand, the first film variation maximizes the spectator's excitement to the extent of its argumentative force and its ability to convey emotional aspects of the event, observe, and comment, "with cunning artifice," as the old master has noted (Hitchcock on Grierson, 1965, m.s. 05:55). The used non-Direct Cinema elements in the first film variation draw a clearer picture of the film-maker as a mediator between the subject and the spectator. The film can be thus thought of clearly "as a construction -as the interpretive act of someone who has a culture and an ideology, and often a conscious point of view, all of which cause the image to convey a certain kind of knowledge in a particular way..." (Ruby, 1988, p. 309). As we have seen in Chapter I, the importance of the film-maker's subjective view has also raised issues regarding the Verite movement, and its observational rhetoric, despite its efforts to record the spontaneous and its unwillingness to control the recorded reality. Emile de Antonio characterized it a lie, a childish assumption, a joke; according to him, "[o]nly people without feelings or convictions could even think of making *Cinéma Vérité*" (cited in Bruzzi, 2000, p. 67). As in the pool-film, *Syntagma Sq.*'s historical context is offered mainly through the text of the thesis, and the project's site, despite its use of voice-over commentary. The first film variation adopts the pool-film's point of view and uses the same materials to describe reality at a socio-political level. The second film variation, which shall be examined next, reinforces the above issues in a different manner, shedding light to a different level of reality.

Syntagma Diary

The second film variation has been made by a fictional character who shares my name. He has attended the demonstration for six brief hours and walked away after the tear-gas started to fill the air. He decided to record his experience on a video diary and share it with the world through the WWW. His view, as the view of many Greek citizens, is

mostly informed by TV and although his film is constructed as honestly as the other two PaR films, and his material arrives from the same pool, he reaches different conclusions. His honesty is best exemplified in the voice over commentary (m.s. 04:05-04:20) in which he confesses that what he saw on the news later that night “was not what really happened” (*This is what Democracy Looks Like, 2000*, m.s. 23:18). As the woman in the first case study, my doppelganger had been on the streets protesting and when he went back home he noticed that not much of what he experienced had reached the TV viewers. With honesty he includes in his audiovisual testimony the kind of programs that were aired by the Greek mainstream media that night. Although this footage has not been actually recorded at the day of the event, but rather found in another documentary film dealing with a different date,⁸³ it represents the spirit of the TV program that was aired during the night of June 28th, 2011, in Athens, accurately. Indeed, it was astonishing that on the very same day hundreds of thousands of citizens had taken to the streets of the Greek capital to express their indignation, the mainstream TV media of the country, after the lights of the evening news were off, followed their scheduled programs and went on with ads, soap operas, and reality programs, as usual; no further discussion of the day’s events occurred after ten thirty that night.

The poor fictional me, although able to notice the silence of the mainstream media in the face of an historic event of great proportions, was unable to connect it to other occurrences of the same nature. Seattle, Toronto and Manama are just the names of world cities to him. The editor of the second film variation lacks the necessary information to connect the events he describes with the pattern we saw emerging during the examination of the case studies. As stated earlier, a recurring pattern in the case studies is the way in which mainstream media distorted the events and offered the

⁸³ *Let’s Not Live Like Slaves* (Youlountas, 2013).

authorities the justification to undermine the rule of law and abolish civil rights. He is not aware of the attitude of the mainstream media during demonstrations and public unrest in the USA, Canada, and Bahrain, but, most importantly, he is unaware of Chomsky's words, that the mainstream media are serving the ruling elites by controlling "what people think" (*Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media*, 1992, m.s. 25:55).

As mentioned earlier, although *Syntagma Diary*'s raw footage is common to all three films and almost entirely shot by me, it arrives at different conclusions. According to my twin, the police presence was discrete that day, they were there to assist people to exercise their democratic right of demonstrating in public. Unfortunately, my other self's diary is brief and focused exclusively on the specific event, there is no information in it about its author's culture and ideology. Since he notices the distortion of the events by the mainstream media without being able to provide a reason for it, we can safely deduce that he is not familiar with the policing tactics in state-threatening situations, as concluded above. In consequence, his interpretation of the facts and his filmic construction depend exclusively on his uninformed point of view and cause "the image to convey a certain kind of knowledge in a particular way" (Ruby, 1988, p. 309). As in Werner Herzog's tale about the night watchman at the Supreme Court (1999), his uninformed, over simplistic, approach raises obstacles in the understanding between the subject and the spectator, in a conversation the author of *Syntagma Diary* mediates. Like the above night watchman he is only part right; in this case his right derives from the factual value of the shot images, for the normative power of the factual cannot be disregarded, according to Herzog (2010). The recorded crowd was there, at that day, and its presence had consequences on people's lives. Of course, reality has never moved Herzog, what moves him is "the question of truth" (2010). The factual

reveals a “superficial truth, the truth of accountants” (ibid.), whereas Herzog is moved by “a poetic, ecstatic truth...; one attains it through vision, style, and craft” (2010).

Of course, my dear twin has no aspiration to be a film-maker and he is unconscious of his role as a mediator between his subject and the modern *Internauts*. He just expressed himself through an autobiographic film which conveys a personal level of reality. He is not particularly moved by either the accountant’s truth or the ecstatic truth of Herzog, he does not even have any particular questions to ask. His only true question, his only doubt, emerges in the end of the film as a result of his interaction with the material and his memories of the day. Why all this silence by the mainstream media? Not surprisingly for an autobiographical text, the question is formed as a confession (m.s. 04:05) and conveys its author’s personal view. The editor of *Syntagma Diary* extensively used voice-over narration in his film to solely describe himself. Like *Into the Fire* (Dicks, 2011) and its interviews, his particular use of the voice-over causes the evidential status of his film to vary. Since *Syntagma Diary* does not subscribe to the point of view of the pool-film, it does not share the background contextual knowledge described in the section A of the Chapter, or it has dismissed it. Although my double uses the formal element of voice-over narration to explain his view, he uses it inefficiently. His particular use of the voice-over commentary fails to provide accurate information, on both the presented images and the historical context these images are part of. In consequence, the film’s evidential status is lowered.

IV. B. 6 **Conclusions.**

As we have seen in Chapter II, digital technologies may alter the ways in which documentary works are produced, distributed, and received by the audience. As Manovich argues, however, “[o]ne general effect of the digital revolution is that avant-garde aesthetic strategies.... [of the 1920s] *became materialized in a computer*” (2001, pp. 306-307, emphasis in the original) as “[w]e still have not left the era of the screen” (ibid., 115). In *The Language of New Media* (2001), Manovich supports the notion that digitization did not put an end to cinema’s visual culture, but rather developed it through the accumulation of a series of new affordances. Interestingly, the based on numeric representation digital image can be heavily altered or even invented from scratch, therefore cannot be trusted as an accurate representation of an object or event. As discussed in Chapter III, the documentary project *18 Days in Egypt* (Mehta, 2012) is an early example of how digitization introduces new, profound, ways of communicating through networks. Digitization and the uses it affords have made possible the inclusion of plural views in documentary projects as well as the confirmation and cross-examination of documentary testimonies. Indeed, although the documentary agenda has not changed radically by the advent of digitization, through the new affordances it brought to documentary, digital technology proved able to elevate documentary’s evidential status and enhance its claims to represent social reality, even if truth still cannot in any way be guaranteed. The consequences of digital technology had a major impact on both the production and the distribution of the PaR of the thesis as well, since the lack of it would have so greatly affected the project’s budget that it would have led to different choices and a totally different outcome.

As we have seen in Chapter I, the documentary film-maker, “like any communicator in any medium, makes endless choices.... [and each choice] is an expression of his [or her] point of view, whether he [or she] is aware of it or not, whether he [or she] acknowledges it or not” (Barnouw cited in Bruzzi, 2000, p. 4). In the PaR films I have made a series of choices from the pre-production, to the shooting, to the post-production stages. During the shooting of the films, I considered most valuable, for facilitating the understanding of the particular situation, to describe *the feeling of being there*. In consequence, I chose to record *the kind of truth that only personal experience can provide* and not to offer the opportunity to the viewers to express their views through the interactive elements that Remix has made possible. Therefore, the choice of using the Direct Cinema set of rules for recording, almost in their entirety, became an obvious one. Furthermore, the endless choices every film-maker has to make during the shooting of a documentary production, I made wholeheartedly on the side of the people and I chose to reveal this stance of mine through my shooting technique. Finally, I chose the elements to emphasize in the capturing of reality, according to what I felt was closer to the heart of the situation I witnessed.

As stated earlier, although fairness and impartiality was an aspiration of mine in the making of *Syntagma 34*, through the choices I have made and the written text analyzing the politics of the events, I have constructed an argument, not merely a social document on film (Hitchcock on Grierson, 1965, m.s. 05:55). The freer use of the cinematic means by *Syntagma Sq.* made its authorial choices more obvious and, according to Wiseman, choice equals bias, prejudice, and subjectivity (2006, p. 279). The view of the pool-film and its first variation is backed up by a significant number of people, as it is evident in the text and on the web-site, Noam Chomsky, the prominent philosopher, intellectual, and professor of language, being one of them. As Carroll put it in Chapter I, selectivity

might make “bias possible; it may in some contexts even invite bias... [b]ut it does not *guarantee* bias” (1996b, p. 284, emphasis in the original). Therefore, to the extent I have tried to record what happened honestly and completely, without falsification or omission of crucial known facts, each of the above films has a certain evidential value regardless of my choice of contents, or techniques, or stylistic elements.

Syntagma Diary’s editor has uttered his convictions without deceiving, hence his confession has been an honest one. But, although his words and thoughts do correspond, his convictions are biased and do not “have affinity with fact,”⁸⁴ therefore his testimony is not truthful. There is very little evidence in support of his point of view while there is plenty of evidence supporting the different view of the other two PaR films. As a result, in the case examined, honesty has not been a sufficient condition for raising documentary’s evidential force. If, as Herzog put it, the Direct Cinema elements of the pool-film convey the accountant’s truth, the more formal construction of the first film variation must be closer to Herzog’s notion of “poetic truth” (2010). As stated earlier, *poetic truth* can be attained “through vision, style, and craft” (ibid). On the other hand, *Syntagma Diary*’s truth rests on the personal level; a specific individual, expressing his personal views as they stand at some point in time. Apart from honest, *Syntagma 34* and *Syntagma Sq.* are truthful on a socio-political level while *Syntagma Diary* utters solely its author’s personal truth.

According to this thesis, six main ways were found to elevate digital documentary’s evidential status and enhance its claims to represent social reality:

1. Combining the intention to honestly record what happened with the frank and open admission of where the film-maker’s sympathies lie.

⁸⁴ See footnote #7.

2. Avoiding to highlight the spectacular or any other element at the expense of factual truth in the choice and presentation of content.
3. Submitting accurate (not falsified) evidence which is also complete (crucial known facts not omitted).
4. Compensating for the limitations of whatever techniques or styles are used for the delivery of documentary truth by supplementing them with other techniques or styles, leading toward greater intellectual understanding and participation of the viewer; for technique or style as such cannot guarantee the truth.
5. Being well informed when mediating between the subject and the audience; for honesty, as such, can also not guarantee the truth beyond a personal, limited, level.
6. Including evidence taken from multiple sources, synthesizing a multitude of testimonies, which can be efficiently presented through a digital platform of communication like a website on the WWW.

As stated from the beginning of this thesis, reality is the *common* external origin of *different* related perceptions (Russell, 1985, p. 25, emphasis added); therefore, the multiplicity of accounts heightens documentary's value as evidence by conveying a factual truth that extends beyond the personal and synthesizes different views.

Furthermore, the offering of the ability to the viewer to add or remove elements of the filmic construction in order to cross-examine the available testimonies, participating in the creation of the documentary work with the aid of the sharing culture of Remix, further heightens documentary film's value as evidence.

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